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THE

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

WITH

REMARKS

ON

EPISTOLARY WRITERS.

By WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

A NEW EDITION.

"*Obversatur oculis ille vir, quo neminem ætas nostra graviorem, sanctiorem, subtiliorem denique tulit: quem ego quum ex admiratione diligere cœpissem, quod evenire contrà solet, magis admiratus sum, postquam penitus inspexi. Inspexi enim penitus: nihil a me ille secretum, non joculare, non serium, non triste, non lætum.*"

Plinii Epist. Lib. 4, Ep. 17.

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VOL. III.

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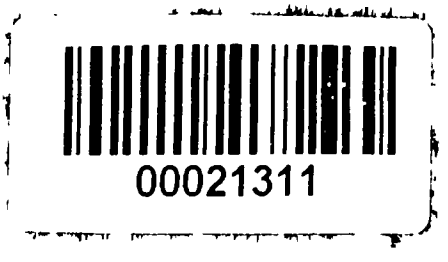

THE

LIFE OF COWPER.

The visit of Lady Hesketh, to Olney, led to a very favorable change in the residence of Cowper. He had now passed nineteen years in a scene, that was far from suiting him. The house, he inhabited, looked on a market place, and once, in a season of illness, he was so apprehensive of being incommoded by the bustle of a fair, that he requested to lodge, for a single night, under the roof of his friend Mr. Newton; and he was tempted by the more comfortable situation of the vicarage, to remain fourteen months in the house of his benevolent neighbour. His intimacy with this venerable divine was so great, that Mr. Newton has described it in the following remarkable

terms, in memoirs of the poet, which affection induced him to begin, but which the troubles and infirmities of very advanced life, have obliged him to relinquish.

" For nearly twelve years we were seldom se-
" parated for seven hours at a time, when we were
" awake, and at home:—The first six I passed in
" daily admiring, and aiming to imitate him: during
" the second six, I walked pensively with him in
" the valley of the shadow of death."

Mr. Newton records, with a becoming satisfaction, the evangelical charity of his friend: " He loved the poor," says his devout memorialist: " He often
" visited them in their cottages, conversed with them
" in the most condescending manner, sympathized
" with them, counselled and comforted them in their
" distresses; and those, who were seriously disposed,
" were often cheered, and animated, by his prayers!"
After the removal of Mr. Newton, to London, and the departure of Lady Austen, Olney had no particular attractions for Cowper; and Lady Hesketh was happy in promoting the project, which had occurred to him, of removing, with Mrs. Unwin, to the near and pleasant village of Weston. A scene highly favorable to his health and amusement! For, with a

very comfortable mansion, it afforded him a garden; and a field of considerable extent, which he delighted to cultivate and embellish. With these he had advantages still more desirable—easy, perpetual access to the spacious and tranquil pleasure-grounds of his accomplished and benevolent landlord, Mr. Throckmorton, whose neighbouring house supplied him with society, peculiarly suited to his gentle and delicate spirit.

He removed from Olney, to Weston, in November 1786. The course of his life, in his new situation, (the spot most pleasing to his fancy!) will be best described by the subsequent series of his letters to that amiable relation, to whom he considered himself as chiefly indebted for this improvement in his domestic scenery. With these I shall occasionally connect a selection of his letters to other friends, and particularly the letters addressed to one of his most intimate correspondents, who happily commenced an acquaintance with the poet, in the beginning of the year 1787. I add, with pleasure, the name of Mr. Rose, the barrister, whose friendship I was so fortunate as to share, by meeting him at Weston, in a subsequent period, and whom I instantly learnt to regard, by finding that he held very justly

a place of the most desirable distinction in the heart of Cowper.

LETTER I.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Olney, June 19, 1786.

My dear Cousin's arrival has, as it could not fail to do, made us happier than we ever were at Olney. Her great kindness in giving us her company, is a cordial that I shall feel the effect of not only while she is here, but while I live.

Olney will not be much longer the place of our habitation. At a village, two miles distant, we have hired a house of Mr. Throckmorton, a much better than we occupy at present, and yet not more expensive. It is situated very near to our most agreeable landlord, and his agreeable pleasure grounds. In him, and in his wife, we shall find such companions as will always make the time pass pleasantly while they are in the country, and his grounds will afford

us good air, and good walking room in the winter; two advantages which we have not enjoyed at Olney, where I have no neighbour with whom I can converse and where, seven months in the year, I have been imprisoned by dirty and impassable ways, till both my health, and Mrs. Unwin's, have suffered materially.

Homer is ever importunate, and will not suffer me to spend half the time with my distant friends that I would gladly give them.

W. C.

LETTER II.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 3, 1786.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

After a long silence I begin again. A day given to my friends, is a day taken from Homer, but to such an interruption, now and then occurring, I have no objection. Lady Hesketh is, as you observe, arrived, and has been with us near a fortnight. She pleases every body, and is pleased

in her turn, with every thing she finds at Olney; is always cheerful, and sweet-tempered, and knows no pleasure equal to that of communicating pleasure to us, and to all around her. This disposition in her is the more comfortable, because it is not the humour of the day, a sudden flash of benevolence and good-spirits, occasioned merely by a change of scene, but it is her natural turn, and has governed all her conduct ever since I knew her first. We are consequently happy in her society, and shall be happier still to have you partake with us in our joy. I am fond of the sound of bells, but was never more pleased with those of Olney, than when they rang her into her new habitation. It is a compliment that our performers upon those instruments have never paid to any other personage (Lord Dartmouth excepted) since we knew the town. In short, she is, as she ever was, my pride and my joy, and I am delighted with every thing that means to do her honor. Her first appearance was too much for me; my spirits, instead of being gently raised, as I had inadvertently supposed they would be, broke down with me, under the pressure of too much joy, and left me flat, or rather melancholy, throughout the day, to a degree that was mortifying to myself, and alarming to her. But I have made amends

for this failure since, and in point of cheerfulness have far exceeded her expectations, for she knew that sable had been my suit for many years.

And now I shall communicate news that will give you pleasure. When you first contemplated the front of our abode, you were shocked. In your eyes it had the appearance of a prison, and you sighed at the thought that your Mother lived in it. Your view of it was not only just, but prophetic. It had not only the aspect of a place built for the purposes of incarceration, but has actually served that purpose through a long, long period, and we have been the prisoners. But a goal-delivery is at hand. The bolts and bars are to be loosed, and we shall escape. A very different mansion, both in point of appearance, and accommodation, expects us, and the expence of living in it not greater than we are subjected to in this. It is situated at Weston, one of the prettiest villages in England, and belongs to Mr. Throckmorton. We all three dine with him to-day by invitation, and shall survey it in the afternoon, point out the necessary repairs, and finally adjust the treaty. I have my Cousin's promise that she will never let another year pass without a visit to us, and the house is large enough to take us, and our suite, and her also, with

as many of hers as she shall chuse to bring. The change will I hope prove advantageous, both to your Mother and me, in all respects. Here we have no neighbourhood, there we shall have most agreeable neighbours in the Throckmortons. Here we have a bad air in winter, impregnated with the fishy smelling fumes of the marsh miasma; there we shall breathe in an atmosphere untainted. Here we are confined from September to March, and sometimes longer; there we shall be upon the very verge of pleasure-grounds in which we can always ramble, and shall not wade through almost impassable dirt to get at them. Both your Mother's constitution and mine have suffered materially by such close and long confinement, and it is high time, unless we intend to retreat into the grave, that we should seek out a more wholesome residence. So far is well, the rest is left to heaven.

I have hardly left myself room for an answer to your queries, concerning my friend John, and his studies. I should recommend the civil war of Cæsar, because he wrote it, who ranks, I believe, as the best writer, as well as soldier, of his day. There are books (I know not what they are, but you do, and can easily find them) that will inform him clearly of both the civil and military management of the

Romans, the several officers, I mean, in both departments; and what was the peculiar province of each. The study of some such book, would I should think prove a good introduction to that of Livy, unless you have a Livy with notes to that effect. A want of intelligence in those points, has heretofore made the Roman history very dark and difficult to me; therefore I thus advise.

Yours ever,

W. C.

LETTER III.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, July 4, 1786.

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you have at last received my proposals, and most cordially thank you for all your labours in my service. I have friends in the world, who knowing that I am apt to be careless when left to myself, are determined to watch over me with a jealous eye upon this occasion. The consequence will be, that the work will be

better executed, but more tardy in the production. To them I owe it, that my translation, as fast as it proceeds, passes under the revisal of a most accurate discerner of all blemishes. I know not whether I told you before, or now tell you for the first time, that I am in the hands of a very extraordinary person. He is intimate with my bookseller, and voluntarily offered his service. I was at first doubtful, whether to accept it or not, but finding that my friends above-said were not to be satisfied on any other terms, though myself a perfect stranger to the man and his qualifications, except as he was recommended by Johnson, I at length consented, and have since found great reason to rejoice that I did. I called him an extraordinary person, and such he is. For he is not only versed in Homer, and accurate in his knowledge of the Greek to a degree that entitles him to that appellation, but though a foreigner, is a perfect master of our language, and has exquisite taste in English poetry. By his assistance I have improved many passages, supplied many oversights, and corrected many mistakes, such as will of course escape the most diligent and attentive labourer in such a work. I ought to add, because it affords the best assurance of his zeal and fidelity, that he does not toil for hire,

nor will accept of any premium, but has entered on this business merely for his amusement. In the last instance my sheets will pass through the hands of our old school-fellow Colman, who has engaged to correct the press, and make any little alterations, that he may see expedient. With all this precaution, little as I intended it once, I am now well satisfied. Experience has convinced me, that other eyes than my own are necessary, in order that so long and arduous a task may be finished as it ought, and may neither discredit me, nor mortify and disappoint my friends. You, who, I know, interest yourself much and deeply in my success, will, I dare say, be satisfied with it too. Pope had many aids, and he who follows Pope, ought not to walk alone.

Though I announce myself by my very undertaking to be one of Homer's most enraptured admirers, I am not a blind one. Perhaps the speech of Achilles given in my specimen, is, as you hint, rather too much in the moralizing strain, to suit so young a man, and of so much fire. But whether it be, or not, in the course of the close application that I am forced to give to my author, I discover inadvertencies not a few; some perhaps that have escaped even the commentators themselves, or perhaps in the enthu-

siasm of their idolatry, they resolved that they should pass for beauties. Homer however, say what they will, was man, and in all the works of man, especially in a work of such length and variety, many things will of necessity occur, that might have been better. Pope and Addison had a Dennis, and Dennis, if I mistake not, held up as he has been to scorn and detestation, was a sensible fellow, and passed some censures upon both those writers, that had they been less just, would have hurt them less. Homer had his Zoilus, and perhaps if we knew all that Zoilus said, we should be forced to acknowledge, that sometimes at least, he had reason on his side. But it is dangerous to find any fault at all with what the world is determined to esteem faultless.

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you enjoy some composure, and cheerfulness of spirits, may God preserve and increase to you so great a blessing!

I am affectionately and truly yours

W. C.

LETTER IV.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

August 24, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I catch a minute by the tail and hold it fast, while I write to you. The moment it is fled I must go to breakfast. I am still occupied in refining and polishing, and shall this morning give the finishing hand to the seventh book. F——— does me the honor to say, that the most difficult, and most interesting parts of the poem, are admirably rendered. But because he did not express himself equally pleased with the more pedestrian parts of it, my labour therefore has been principally given to the dignification of them; not but that I have retouched considerably, and made better still the best. In short, I hope to make it all of a piece, and shall exert myself to the utmost to secure that desirable point. A story-teller, so very circumstantial as Homer, must of necessity present us often with much matter in itself capable of no other embellishment than purity of diction, and harmony of versification, can give to it. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* For our

language, unless it be very severely chastised, has not the terseness, nor our measure the music of the Greek. But I shall not fail through want of industry.

We are likely to be very happy in our connexion with the Throckmortons. His reserve and mine wear off; and he talks with great pleasure of the comfort that he proposes to himself from our winter-evening conversations. His purpose seems to be, that we should spend them alternately with each other. Lady Hesketh transcribes for me at present. When she is gone, Mrs. Throckmorton takes up that business, and will be my lady of the ink-bottle for the rest of the winter. She solicited herself that office.

Believe me,

My dear William, truly yours,

W. C.

Mr. Throckmorton will (I doubt not) procure Lord Petre's name, if he can, without any hint from me. He could not interest himself more in my success than he seems to do. Could he get the Pope to subscribe, I should have him; and should be glad of him, and the whole Conclave.

LETTER V.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You are my mahogany box, with a slip in the lid of it, to which I commit my productions of the lyric kind, in perfect confidence that they are safe, and will go no farther. All who are attached to the jingling art have this peculiarity, that they would find no pleasure in the exercise, had they not one friend at least to whom they might publish what they have composed. If you approve my Latin, and your Wife and Sister my English, this together, with the approbation of your Mother, is fame enough for me.

He who cannot look forward with comfort, must find what comfort he can in looking backward. Upon this principle, I the other day sent my imagination upon a trip, thirty years behind me. She was very obedient, and very swift of foot, presently performed her journey, and at last set me down in the sixth form at Westminster. I fancied myself once more a school-boy, a period of life in which if I had never tasted

true happiness, I was at least equally unacquainted with its contrary. No manufacturer of waking dreams ever succeeded better in his employment than I do. I can weave such a piece of tapestry in a few minutes, as not only has all the charms of reality, but is embellished also with a variety of beauties, which though they never existed, are more captivating than any that ever did—accordingly I was a school-boy in high favor with the master, received a silver-groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form, for the admiration of all who were able to understand it. Do you wish to see this highly applauded performance? It follows on the other side.

(TORN OFF.)

LETTER VI.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

You are sometimes indebted to bad weather, but more frequently to a dejected

state of mind, for my punctuality as a correspondent. This was the case when I composed that tragi-comic ditty for which you thank me, my spirits were exceeding low, and having no fool or jester at hand, I resolved to be my own. The end was answered; I laughed myself, and I made you laugh. Sometimes I pour out my thoughts in a mournful strain, but those sable effusions your Mother will not suffer me to send you, being resolved that nobody shall share with me the burthen of my melancholy but herself. In general you may suppose that I am remarkably sad when I seem remarkably merry. The effort we make to get rid of a load, is usually violent in proportion to the weight of it. I have seen at Sadler's Wells, a tight little fellow dancing, with a fat man upon his shoulders; to those who looked at him, he seemed insensible of the incumbrance, but if a physician had felt his pulse, when the feat was over, I suppose he would have found the effect of it there. Perhaps you remember the Undertakers' dance in the Rehearsal, which they perform in crape hat-bands and black-cloaks, to the tune of "Hob or Nob;" one of the sprightliest airs in the world. Such is my fiddling, and such is my dancing; but they serve a purpose

which at some certain times could not be so effectually promoted by any thing else.

I have endeavoured to comply with your request, though I am not good at writing upon a given subject. Your Mother however comforts me by her approbation, and I steer myself in all that I produce by her judgment. If she does not understand me at the first reading, I am sure the lines are obscure, and always alter them; if she laughs, I know it is not without reason; and if she says, "that's well, it will do"—I have no fear lest any body else should find fault with it. She is my lord chamberlain, who licenses all I write.

To MISS C——

ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

How many between east and west
Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
The day that gave them birth;

Not so when Stella's natal morn
Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
And wish her born once more!

If you like it, use it. If not you know the remedy. It is serious, yet epigrammatic——like a bishop at a ball!

LETTER VII.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am sensibly mortified at finding myself obliged to disappoint you; but though I have had many thoughts upon the subject you propose to my consideration, I have had none that have been favorable to the undertaking. I applaud your purpose, for the sake of the principle from which it springs, but I look upon the evils you mean to animadvert upon, as too obstinate and inveterate ever to be expelled by the means you mention. The very persons to whom you would address your remonstrance, are themselves sufficiently aware of their enormity; years ago, to my knowledge, they were frequently the topics of conversations at polite tables;

they have been frequently mentioned in both houses of parliament; and, I suppose, there is hardly a member of either, who would not immediately assent to the necessity of reformation, were it proposed to him in a reasonable way. But there it stops; and there it will for ever stop, till the majority are animated with a zeal in which they are at present deplorably defective. A religious man is unfeignedly shocked when he reflects upon the prevalence of such crimes, a moral man must needs be so in a degree, and will affect to be much more so than he is. But how many do you suppose there are among our worthy representatives, that come under either of these descriptions? If all were such, yet to new model the police of the country, which must be done in order to make even unavoidable perjury less frequent, were a task they would hardly undertake, on account of the great difficulty that would attend it. Government is too much interested in the consumption of malt-liquor, to reduce the number of venders. Such plausible pleas may be offered in defence of travelling on Sundays, especially by the trading part of the world, as the whole bench of bishops would find it difficult to overrule. And with respect to the violation of oaths, till a certain name is more generally respected, than it is

at present, however such persons as yourself may be grieved at it, the legislature are never likely to lay it to heart. I do not mean, nor would by any means attempt, to discourage you in so laudable an enterprize, but such is the light in which it appears to me, that I do not feel the least spark of courage qualifying or prompting me to embark in it myself. An exhortation therefore written by me, by hopeless desponding me, would be flat, insipid, and uninteresting; and disgrace the cause instead of serving it. If after what I have said however, you still retain the same sentiments, *Macte esto virtute tuâ*, there is nobody better qualified than yourself, and may your success prove, that I despaired of it without a reason.

Adieu

My dear friend,

W. C.

LETTER VIII.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I write under the impression of a difficulty not easily surmounted, the want of something to say. Letter-spinning is generally more entertaining to the writer, than the reader; for your sake therefore, I would avoid it, but a dearth of materials is very apt to betray one into a trifling strain, in spite of all our endeavours to be serious.

I left off on Saturday, this present being Monday morning, and I renew the attempt, in hopes that I may possibly catch some subject by the end, and be more successful.

So have I seen the maids in vain
Tumble and tease a tangled skein:
They bite the lip, and scratch the head,
And cry——"the deuce is in the thread!"
They torture it, and jerk it round,
'Till the right end at last is found,
Then wind, and wind, and wind away,
And what was work is chang'd to play.

When I wrote the first two lines, I thought I had engaged in a hazardous enterprise; for thought I, should my poetical vein be as dry as my prosaic, I shall spoil the sheet, and send nothing at all: for I could on no account endure the thought of beginning again. But I think I have succeeded to admiration, and am willing to flatter myself, that I have even seen a worse impromptu in the news-papers.

Though we live in a nook, and the world is quite unconscious that there are any such beings in it as ourselves, yet we are not unconcerned about what passes in it. The present awful crisis, big with the fate of England, engages much of our attention. The action is probably over by this time, and though we know it not, the grand question is decided, whether the war shall roar in our once peaceful fields, or whether we shall still only hear of it at a distance. I can compare the nation to no similitude more apt, than that of an ancient castle, that had been for days assaulted by the battering ram. It was long before the stroke of that engine made any sensible impression, but the continual repetition at length communicated a slight tremor to the wall, the next, and the next, and the next blow encreased it. Another shock puts the whole mass in motion, from the top to the

foundation; it bends forward, and is every moment driven farther from the perpendicular; till at last the decisive blow is given, and down it comes. Every million that has been raised within the last century, has had an effect upon the constitution, like that of a blow from the aforesaid ram, upon the aforesaid wall. The impulse becomes more and more important, and the impression it makes is continually augmented; unless therefore something extraordinary intervenes to prevent it——you will find the consequence at the end of my simile.

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER IX.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

As I promised you verse, if you would send me a frank, I am not willing to return the cover without some, though, I think, I have already wearied you by the prolixity of my prose *.

* Here followed his poem, the Lilly and the Rose.

I must refer you to those unaccountable gaddings and caprices of the human mind, for the cause of this production; for in general, I believe, there is no man who has less to do with the ladies' cheeks than I have: I suppose it would be best to antedate it, and to imagine it was written twenty years ago, for my mind was never more in a trifling butterfly trim, than when I composed it, even in the earliest parts of my life. And what is worse than all this, I have translated it into Latin. But that some other time.

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER X.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

How apt we are to deceive ourselves where self is in question: you say I am in your debt, and I accounted you in mine: a mistake to which you must attribute my arrears, if indeed I

owe you any, for I am not backward to write where the uppermost thought is welcome.

I am obliged to you for all the books you have occasionally furnished me with: I did not indeed read many of Johnson's Classics—those of established reputation are so fresh in my memory, though many years have intervened since I made them my companions, that it was like reading what I read yesterday over again: and as to the minor Classics, I did not think them worth reading at all——I tasted most of them, and did not like them——it is a great thing to be indeed a poet, and does not happen to more than one man in a century. Churchill, the great Churchill, deserved the name of poet—I have read him twice, and some of his pieces three times over, and the last time with more pleasure than the first. The pitiful scribbler of his life, seems to have undertaken that task, for which he was entirely unqualified, merely because it afforded him an opportunity to traduce him. He has inserted in it but one anecdote of consequence for which he refers you to a novel, and introduces the story, with doubts about the truth of it. But his barrenness as a biographer I could forgive, if the simpleton had not thought himself a judge of his writings, and under the erro-

neous influence of that thought, informs his reader that Gotham, Independence, and the Times, were catchpennies. Gotham, unless I am a greater blockhead than he, which I am far from believing, is a noble and beautiful poem, and a poem with which I make no doubt the author took as much pains,as with any he ever wrote. Making allowance (and Dryden perhaps, in his Absalom and Architophel stands in need of the same indulgence) for an unwarrantable use of scripture, it appears to me to be a masterly performance. Independence is a most animated piece, full of strength and spirit, and marked with that bold masculine character, which I think is the great peculiarity of this writer. And the Times (except that the subject is disgusting to the last degree) stands equally high in my opinion. He is indeed a careless writer for the most part, but where shall we find in any of those authors, who finish their works with the exactness of a Flemish pencil, those bold and daring strokes of fancy, those numbers so hazardously ventured upon, and so happily finished, the matter so compressed, and yet so clear, and the colouring so sparingly laid on, and yet with such a beautiful effect? In short, it is not his least praise that he is never guilty of those faults as a writer,

which he lays to the charge of others. A proof that he did not judge by a borrowed standard, or from rules laid down by critics, but that he was qualified to do it by his own native powers, and his great superiority of genius. For he that wrote so much, and so fast, would through inadvertence and hurry, unavoidably have departed from rules which he might have found in books, but his own truly poetical talent was a guide which could not suffer him to err. A race-horse is graceful in his swiftest pace, and never makes an awkward motion though he is pushed to his utmost speed. A cart-horse might perhaps be taught to play tricks in the riding-school, and might prance and curvet like his betters, but at some unlucky time would be sure to betray the baseness of his original. It is an affair of very little consequence perhaps to the well-being of mankind, but I cannot help regretting that he died so soon. Those words of Virgil, upon the immature death of Marcellus, might serve for his epitaph.

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
"Esse sinent——."

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER XI.

To the Rev. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I find the Register in all respects an entertaining medley, but especially in this, that it has brought to my view some long forgotten pieces of my own production. I mean by the way two or three. Those I have marked with my own initials, and you may be sure I found them peculiarly agreeable, as they had not only the grace of being mine, but that of novelty likewise to recommend them. It is at least twenty years since I saw them. You I think was never a dabbler in rhyme. I have been one ever since I was fourteen years of age, when I began with translating an elegy of Tibullus. I have no more right to the name of a poet, than a maker of mouse-traps has to that of an engineer, but my little exploits in this way have at times amused me so much, that I have often wished myself a good one. Such a talent in verse as mine, is like a child's rattle, very entertaining to the trifler that uses it, and very disagreeable to all beside. But it has served to rid me of

some melancholy moments, for I only take it up as a gentleman-performer does his fiddle. I have this peculiarity belonging to me as a rhymist, that though I am charmed to a great degree with my own work, while it is on the anvil, I can seldom bear to look at it when it is once finished. The more I contemplate it, the more it looses its value, till I am at last disgusted with it. I then throw it by, take it up again, perhaps ten years after, and am as much delighted with it as at the first.

Few people have the art of being agreeable when they talk of themselves, if your are not weary therefore, you pay me a high compliment.

I dare say Miss S—— was much diverted with the conjecture of her friends. The true key to the pleasure she found at Olney, was plain enough to be seen, but they chose to overlook it. She brought with her a disposition to be pleased, which whoever does, is sure to find a visit agreeable, because they make it so.

Yours,

W. C.*

* *NOTE BY THE EDITOR.*

This dateless letter, which is probably entitled to a very early place in the collection, was reserved to close the corres-

LETTER XII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, August 31, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I began to fear for your health, and every day said to myself—I must write to Bagot soon, if it be only to ask him how he does—a measure that I should certainly have pursued long since, had I been less absorbed in Homer than I am. But such are my engagements in that quarter, that they make me, I think, good for little else.

Many thanks, my friend, for the names that you have sent me. The Bagots will make a most conspicuous figure among my subscribers, and I shall not, I hope, soon forget my obligations to them.

The unacquaintedness of modern ears with the divine harmony of Milton's numbers, and the principles upon which he constructed them, is the cause

pondence of Mr. Unwin, from the hope, that before the press advanced so far, the editor might recover those unknown verses of Cowper to which the letter alludes, but all researches for this purpose have failed.

of the quarrel that they have with elisions in blank verse. But where is the remedy? In vain should you or I, and a few hundreds more perhaps who have studied his versification, tell them of the superior majesty of it, and that for that majesty it is greatly indebted to those elisions. In their ears they are discord and dissonance; they lengthen the line beyond its due limits, and are therefore not to be endured. There is a whimsical inconsistence in the judgment of modern readers in this particular. Ask them all round, whom do you account the best writer of blank verse? and they will reply almost to a man, Milton, to be sure; Milton against the field! Yet if a writer of the present day should contrast his numbers exactly upon Milton's plan, not one in fifty of the professed admirers of Milton, would endure him. The case standing thus, what is to be done? An author must either be contented to give disgust to the generality, or he must humour them by sinning against his own judgment. This latter course, so far as elisions are concerned, I have adopted as essential to my success. In every other respect I give as much variety in my measure as I can, I believe I may say as in ten syllables it is possible to give, shifting perpetually the pause and

cadence, and accounting myself happy that modern refinement has not yet enacted laws against this also. If it had I protest to you I would have dropped my design of translating Homer entirely; and with what an indignant stateliness of reluctance I make them the concession that I have mentioned, Mrs. Unwin can witness, who hears all my complaints upon the subject.

After having lived twenty years at Olney, we are on the point of leaving it, but shall not migrate far. We have taken a house in the village of Weston. Lady Hesketh is our good angel, by whose aid we are enabled to pass into a better air, and a more walkable country. The imprisonment that we have suffered here for so many winters, has hurt us both. That we may suffer it no longer, she stoops to Olney, lifts us from our swamp, and sets us down on the elevated grounds of Weston Underwood. There, my dear friend, I shall be happy to see you, and to thank you in person for all your kindness.

I do not wonder at the judgment that you form of—a foreigner; but you may assure yourself that, foreigner as he is, he has an exquisite taste in English verse. The man is all fire, and an enthusiast in the highest degree, on the subject of Homer, and

has given me more than once a jog when I have been inclined to nap with my author. No cold water is to be feared from him that might abate my own fire, rather perhaps too much combustible.

Adieu! non ami,

Yours faithfully,

W. C.

LETTER XIII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Olney, Oct, 6, 1786.

You have not heard, I suppose, that the ninth book of my translation is at the bottom of the Thames. But it is even so. A storm overtook it in its way to Kingston, and it sunk, together with the whole cargo of the boat in which it was a passenger. Not figuratively foreshowing, I hope, by its submersion, the fate of all the rest. My kind and generous Cousin, who leaves nothing undone, that she thinks can conduce to my comfort, encouragement, or convenience, is my transcriber also,

She wrote the copy, and *she* will have to write it again——*Hers*, therefore, is the damage. I have a thousand reasons to lament that the time approaches when we must lose her. She has made a winterly summer a most delightful one, but the winter itself we must spend without her.

W. C.

LETTER XIV.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

There are some things that do not actually shorten the life of man, yet seem to do so, and frequent removals from place to place are of that number. For my own part at least I am apt to think if I had been more stationary, I should seem to myself to have lived longer. My many changes of habitation have divided my time into many short

periods, and when I look back upou them they appear only as the stages in a day's journey, the first of which is at no very great distance from the last.

I lived longer at Olney than any where. There indeed I lived till mouldering walls and a tottering house warned me to depart. I have accordingly taken the hint, and two days since arrived, or rather took up my abode at Weston. You perhaps have never made the experiment, but I can assure you that the confusion which attends a transmigration of this kind is infinite, and has a terrible effect in deranging the intellects. I have been obliged to renounce my Homer on the occasion, and though not for many days, I yet feel as if study and meditation, so long my confirmed habits, were on a sudden become impracticable, and that I shall certainly find them so when I attempt them again. But in a scene so much quieter and pleasanter than that which I have just escaped from, in a house, so much more commodious, and with furniture about me so much more to my taste, I shall hope to recover my literary tendency again, when once the bustle of the occasion shall have subsided.

How glad I should be to receive you under a roof where you would find me so much more com-

fortably accommodated than at Olney. I know your warmth of heart toward me, and am sure that you would rejoice in my joy. At present indeed I have not had time for much self-gratulation, but have every reason to hope nevertheless that in due time I shall derive considerable advantage, both in health and spirits from the alteration made in my *where-about*.

I have now the twelfth book of the Iliad in hand, having settled the eleven first books finally, as I think, or nearly so. The winter is the time when I make the greatest riddance.

Adieu, my friend Walter. Let me hear from you, and

Believe me,

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER XV.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston-Lodge, Nov. 26, 1786.

It is my birth-day, my beloved Cousin, and I determine to employ a part of it, that it may not be destitute of festivy, in writing to you. The dark, thick fog that has obscured it, would have been a burthen to me at Olney, but here I have hardly attended to it. The neatness and snugness of our abode, compensates all the dreariness of the season, and whether the ways are wet or dry, our house at least is always warm and commodious. Oh! for you, my Cousin to partake these comforts with us! I will not begin already to tease you upon that subject, but Mrs. Unwin remembers to have heard from your own lips, that you hate London in the spring. Perhaps, therefore, by that time, you may be glad to escape from a scene which will be every day growing more disagreeable, that you may enjoy the comforts of the lodge. You well know that the best house has a desolate appearance unfurnished. This house accordingly, since it has been occupied by us,

and our *meubles*, is as much superior to what it was when you saw it, as you can imagine. The parlour is even elegant. When I say that the parlour is elegant, I do not mean to insinuate that the study is not so. It is neat, warm, and silent, and a much better study than I deserve, if I do not produce in it, an incomparable translation of Homer. I think every day of those lines of Milton, and congratulate myself on having obtained, before I am quite superannuated, what he seems not to have hoped for sooner.

> "And may at length my weary age,
> "Find out the peaceful hermitage!"

For if it is not an hermitage, at least it is a much better thing, and you must always understand, my dear, that when poets talk of cottages, hermitages, and such like things, they mean a house with six sashes in front, two comfortable parlours, a smart stair-case, and three bed-chambers, of convenient dimensions; in short, such a house as this.

The Throckmortons continue the most obliging neighbours in the world. One morning last week, they both went with me to the cliffs—a scene, my dear, in which you would delight beyond mea-

sure, but which you cannot visit except in the spring or autumn. The heat of summer and clinging dirt of winter, would destroy you. What is called the cliff, is no cliff, nor at all like one, but a beautiful terrace, sloping gently down to the Ouse, and from the brow of which, though not lofty, you have a view of such a valley, as makes that which you see from the hills near Olney, and which I have had the honor to celebrate, an affair of no consideration.

Wintry as the weather is, do not suspect that it confines me. I ramble daily, and every day change my ramble. Wherever I go, I find short grass under my feet, and when I have travelled perhaps five miles, come home with shoes not at all too dirty for a drawing-room. I was pacing yesterday under the elms, that surround the field in which stands the great alcove, when lifting my eyes I saw two black genteel figures bolt through a hedge, into the path where I was walking. You guess already who they were, and that they could be nobody but our neighbours. They had seen me from a hill at a distance, and had traversed a great turnip-field to get at me. You see therefore, my dear, that I am in some request. Alas! in too much request with some peo-

ple. The verses of Cadwallader have found me at last.

I am charmed with your account of our little Cousin * at Kensington. If the world does not spoil him hereafter, he will be a valuable man,

Good night, and may God bless thee,

W. C.

LETTER XVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1786.

I sent you, my dear, a melancholy letter, and I do not know that I shall now send you one very unlike it. Not that any thing occurs in consequence of our late loss more afflictive than was to be expected, but the mind does not perfectly recover its tone after a shock like that which has been felt so lately. This I observe, that though my experience has long since taught me, that this world is a

* Lord Cowper.

world of shadows, and that it is the more prudent, as well as the more Christian course, to possess the comforts that we find in it, as if we possessed them not, it is no easy matter to reduce this doctrine into practice. We forget that God who gave them, may, when he pleases, take them away; and that perhaps it may please him to take them at a time when we least expect, or are least disposed to part from them. Thus it has happened in the present case. There never was a moment in Unwin's life when there seemed to be more urgent want of him than the moment in which he died. He had attained to an age, when, if they are at any time useful, men become more useful to their families, their friends, and the world. His parish began to feel, and to be sensible of the advantages of his ministry. The clergy around him were many of them awed by his example. His children were thriving under his own tuition and management, and his eldest boy is likely to feel his loss severely, being by his years, in some respect, qualified to understand the value of such a parent; by his literary proficiency too clever for a school-boy, and too young at the same time for the university. The removal of a man in the prime of life, of such a character, and with such connexions, seems to make a void in society that

can never be filled. God seemed to have made him just what he was, that he might be a blessing to others, and when the influence of his character and abilities began to be felt, removed him. These are mysteries, my dear, that we cannot contemplate without astonishment, but which will nevertheless be explained hereafter, and must in the mean time be revered in silence. It is well for his Mother that she has spent her life in the practice of an habitual acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence, else I know that this stroke would have been heavier, after all that she has suffered upon another account, than she could have borne. She derives; as she well may, great consolation from the thought that he lived the life, and died the death of a Christian. The consequence is, if possible, more unavoidable than the most mathematical conclusion, that therefore he is happy. So farewell, my friend Unwin! The first man for whom I conceived a friendship after my removal from St. Alban's, and for whom I cannot but still continue to feel a friendship, though I shall see thee with these eyes no more!

W. C.

There is something so peculiarly soothing in the sentiments, and the language of Cowper, whenever he speaks of a departed friend, that I feel not a little obliged to Lord Carrington for his kind permission to gratify my readers with the following additional letter on the death of Mr. Unwin.

LETTER XVII.

To ROBERT SMITH, Esq.

Weston Underwood, near Olney, Dec. 9, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

We have indeed suffered a great loss by the death of our friend Unwin, and the shock that attended it was the more severe, as till within a few hours of his decease there seemed to be no very alarming symptoms. All the account that we received from Mr. Henry Thornton, who acted like a true friend on the occasion, and with a tenderness toward all concerned, that does him great honour, encouraged our hopes of his recovery;

and Mrs. Unwin herself found him on her arrival at Winchester, so cheerful, and in appearance so likely to live, that her letter also seemed to promise us all that we could wish on the subject. But an unexpected turn in his distemper, which suddenly seized his bowels, dashed all our hopes, and deprived us almost immediately of a man whom we must ever regret. His mind having been from his infancy, deeply tinctured with religious sentiments, he was always impressed with a sense of the importance of the great change of all, and on former occasions when at any time he found himself indisposed, was consequently subject to distressing alarms and apprehensions. But in this last instance, his mind was from the first composed and easy; his fears were taken away, and succeeded by such a resignation as warrants us in saying "that God made all his bed in his sickness." I believe it is always thus, where the heart though upright toward God, as Unwin's assuredly was, is yet troubled with the fear of death. When death indeed comes, he is either welcome, or at least has lost his sting.

I have known many such instances, and his Mother from the moment that she learned with what tranquillity he was favored in his illness, for that

very reason expected that it would be his last. Yet not with so much certainty, but that the favorable accounts of him at length, in a great measure, superseded that persuasion.

She begs me to assure you, my dear sir, how sensible she is, as well as myself, of the kindness of your enquiries. She suffers this stroke, not with more patience and submission than I expected, for I never knew her hurried by any affliction into the loss of either, but in appearance at least, and at present, with less injury to her health than I apprehended. She observed to me after reading your kind letter, that though it was a proof of the greatness of her loss, it yet afforded her pleasure though a melancholy one, to see how much her son had been loved and valued by such a person as yourself.

Mrs. Unwin wrote to her daughter-in-law, to invite her and the family hither, hoping that a change of a scene, and a situation so pleasant as this, may be of service to her, but we have not yet received her answer. I have good hope however, that great as her affliction must be, she will yet be able to support it, for she well knows whither to resort for consolation.

The virtues and amiable qualities of our friends, are the things for which we most wish to keep them, but they are on the other hand, the very things that in particular ought to reconcile us to their departure. We find ourselves sometimes connected with, and engaged in affection too, to a person of whose readiness and fitness for another life we cannot have the highest opinion. The death of such men has a bitterness in it, both to themselves and survivors, which, thank God! is not to be found in the death of Unwin.

I know, my dear sir, how much you valued him, and I know also how much he valued you. With respect to him, all is well, and of you, if I should survive you, which perhaps is not very probable, I shall say the same,

In the mean time, believe me with the warmest wishes for your health and happiness, and with Mrs. Unwin's affectionate respects,

Yours, my dear sir,

Most faithfully,

W. C.

LETTER XVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 9, 1786.

I am perfectly sure that you are mistaken, though I do not wonder at it, considering the singular nature of the event, in the judgment that you form of poor Unwin's death, as it affects the interest of his intended pupil. When a tutor was wanted for him, you sought out the wisest and best man for the office within the circle of your connexions. It pleased God to take him home to himself. Men eminently wise and good are very apt to die, because they are fit to do so. You found in Unwin, a man worthy to succeed him, and He, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, seeing no doubt that Unwin was ripe for a removal into a better state, removed him also. The matter viewed in this light, seems not so wonderful as to refuse all explanation, except such as in a melancholy moment you have given to it. And I am so convinced that the little boy's destiny had no influence at all in hastening the death of his tutors elect, that were it

not impossible on more accounts than one, that I should be able to serve him in that capacity, I would without the least fear of dying a moment sooner, offer myself to that office; I would even do it, were I conscious of the same fitness for another and a better state, that I believe them to have been both endowed with. In that case, I perhaps might die too, but if I should, it would not be on account of that connexion. Neither, my dear, had your interference in the business, any thing to do with the catastrophe. Your whole conduct in it must have been acceptable in the sight of God, as it was directed by principles of the purest benevolence.

I have not touched Homer to day. Yesterday was one of my terrible seasons, and when I arose this morning I found that I had not sufficiently recovered myself to engage in such an occupation. Having letters to write, I the more willingly gave myself a dispensation. Good Night.

Yours ever,

W. C.

LETTER XIX.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston, Dec. 9, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We had just begun to enjoy the pleasantness of our new situation, to find at least as much comfort in it as the season of the year would permit, when affliction found us out in our retreat, and the news reached us of the death of Mr. Unwin. He had taken a western tour with Mr. Henry Thornton, and in his return, at Winchester, was seized with a putrid fever, which sent him to his grave. He is gone to it, however though young, as fit for it as age itself could have made him. Regretted indeed, and always to be regretted, by those who knew him, for he had every thing that makes a man valuable both in his principles and in his manners, but leaving still this consolation to his surviving friends, that he was desirable in this world chiefly because he was so well prepared for a better.

I find myself here situated exactly to my mind. Weston is one of the prettiest villages in England, and the walks about it at all seasons of the year de-

lightful. I know that you will rejoice with me in the change that we have made, and for which I am altogether indebted to Lady Hesketh. It is a change as great, as, (to compare metropolitan things with rural) from St. Giles to Grovesnor-square. Our house is in all respects commodious, and in some degree elegant; and I cannot give you a better idea of that which we have left, than by telling you the present candidates for it are a publican and a shoemaker.

W. C.

LETTER XX.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 21, 1786.

Your welcome letter, my beloved Cousin, which ought by the date to have arrived on Sunday, being by some untoward accident delayed, came not till yesterday. It came however, and has relieved me from a thousand distressing apprehensions on your account.

The dew of your intelligence has refreshed my poetical laurels. A little praise now and then is very good for your hard-working poet, who is apt to grow languid, and perhaps careless without it. Praise I find affects us as money does. The more a man gets of it, with the more vigilance he watches over and preserves it. Such at least is its effect on me, and you may assure yourself that I will never lose a mite of it for want of care.

I have already invited the good Padre in general terms, and he shall positively dine here next week, whether he will or not. I do not at all suspect that his kindness to Protestants has any thing insidious in it, any more than I suspect that he transcribes Homer for me with a view for my conversion. He would find me a tough piece of business I can tell him, for when I had no religion at all, I had yet a terrible dread of the Pope. How much more now!

I should have sent you a longer letter, but was obliged to devote my last evening to the melancholy employment of composing a Latin inscription for the tomb-stone of poor William, two copies of which I wrote out and inclosed, one to Henry Thornton, and one to Mr. Newton. Homer stands by me biting his thumbs, and swears, that if I do not leave off directly,

he will choak me with bristly Greek, that shall stick in my throat for ever.

W. C.

LETTER XXI.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 3, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You wish to hear from me at any calm interval of epic frenzy. An interval presents itself, but, whether calm or not, is perhaps doubtful. Is it possible for a man to be calm, who for three weeks past has been perpetually occupied in slaughter: letting out one man's bowels, smiting another through the gullet, transfixing the liver of another, and lodging an arrow in the buttock of a fourth? Read the thirteenth book of the Iliad, and you will find such amusing incidents as these the subject of it, the sole subject. In order to interest myself in it, and to catch the spirit of it, I had need discard all humanity. It is woeful work; and were the best poet in

the world to give us at this day such a list of killed and wounded, he would not escape universal censure, to the praise of a more enlightened age be it spoken. I have waded through much blood, and through much more I must wade, before I shall have finished. I determine in the mean time to account it all very sublime, and for two reasons.——First, because all the learned think so, and secondly, because I am to translate it. But were I an indifferent by-stander perhaps I should venture to wish that Homer had applied his wonderful powers to a less disgusting subject. He has in the Odyssey, and I long to get at it.

I have not the good fortune to meet with any of these fine things that you say are printed in my praise. But I learn from certain advertisements in the Morning Herald, that I make a conspicuous figure in the entertainments of Free-Mason's-Hall. I learn also that my volumes are out of print, and that a third edition is soon to be published. But if I am not gratified with the sight of odes composed to my honor and glory, I have at least been tickled with some *douceurs* of a very flattering nature by the post. A lady unknown addresses the best of men ——an unknown gentleman has read my inimitable poems, and invites me to his seat in Hampshire——

another incognito gives me hopes of a memorial in his garden, and a Welsh attorney sends me his verses to revise, and obligingly asks

> "Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
> "Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale!"

If you find me a little vain hereafter, my friend, you must excuse it in consideration of these powerful incentives, especially the latter; for surely the poet who can charm an attorney, especially a Welsh one, must be at least an Orpheus, if not something greater.

Mrs. Unwin is as much delighted as myself with our present situation. But it is a sort of April-weather life that we lead in this world. A little sunshine is generally the prelude to a storm. Hardly had we begun to enjoy the change, when the death of her son cast a gloom upon every thing. He was a most exemplary man; of your order; learned, polite, and amiable. The father of lovely children, and the husband of a wife, (very much like dear Mrs. Bagot) who adored him.

Adieu, my friend! Your affectionate

W. C.

LETTER XXII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 8, 1787.

I have had a little nervous fever lately, my dear, that has somewhat abridged my sleep; and though I find myself better to day than I have been since it seized me, yet I feel my head lightish, and not in the best order for writing. You will find me therefore perhaps not only less alert in my manner than I usually am when my spirits are good, but rather shorter. I will however proceed to scribble till I find that it fatigues me, and then will do as I know you would bid me do were you here, shut up my desk, and take a walk.

The good General tells me, that in the eight first books which I have sent him, he still finds alterations and amendments necessary, of which I myself am equally persuaded; and he asks my leave to lay them before an intimate friend of his, of whom he gives a character that bespeaks him highly deserving such a trust. To this I have no objection, desiring only to make the Translation as perfect as I can make

it. If God grant me life and health, I would spare no labour to secure that point. The General's letter is extremely kind, and both for matter and manner like all the rest of his dealings with his Cousin the poet.

I had a letter also yesterday from Mr. Smith, member for Nottingham. Though we never saw each other, he writes to me in the most friendly terms, and interests himself much in my Homer, and in the success of my subscription. Speaking on this latter subject, he says, that my Poems are read by hundreds, who know nothing of my proposals, and makes no doubt that they would subscribe, if they did. I have myself always thought them imperfectly, or rather insufficiently announced.

I could pity the poor woman, who has been weak enough to claim my song. Such pilferings are sure to be detected. I wrote it, I know not how long, but I suppose four years ago. The Rose in question, was a Rose given to Lady Austen by Mrs. Unwin, and the incident that suggested the subject occurred in the room in which you slept at the vicarage, which Lady Austen made her dining-room. Some time since, Mr. Bull going to London, I gave him a copy of it, which he undertook to convey to Nichols, the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine. He shewed it to a

Mrs. C——, who begged to copy it, and promised to send it to the printer's by her servant. Three or four months afterwards, and when I had concluded it was lost, I saw it in the Gentleman's Magazine, with my signature, W. C. Poor simpleton! She will find now perhaps that the Rose had a thorn, and that she has pricked her fingers with it. Adieu! my beloved Cousin.

W. C.

LETTER XXIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 18, 1787.

I have been so much indisposed with the fever that I told you had seized me, my nights during the whole week may be said to have been almost sleepless. The consequence has been, that except the translation of about thirty lines at the conclusion of the thirteenth book, I have been forced to abandon Homer entirely. This was a sensible mortification to me, as you may suppose, and felt the

more because, my spirits of course failing with my strength, I seemed to have peculiar need of my old amusement. It seemed hard therefore to be forced to resign it just when I wanted it most. But Homer's battles cannot be fought by a man who does not sleep well, and who has not some little degree of animation in the day time. Last night, however, quite contrary to my expectations, the fever left me entirely, and I slept quietly, soundly, and long. If it please God that it return not, I shall soon find myself in a condition to proceed. I walk constantly, that is to say, Mrs. Unwin and I together; for at these times I keep her continually employed, and never suffer her to be absent from me many minutes. She gives me all her time, and all her attention, and forgets, that there is another object in the world.

Mrs. Carter thinks on the subject of dreams as every body else does, that is to say according to her own experience. She has had no extraordinary ones, and therefore accounts them only the ordinary operations of the fancy. Mine are of a texture that will not suffer me to ascribe them to so inadequate a cause, or to any cause but the operation of an exterior agency. I have a mind, my dear, (and to you I will venture to boast of it) as free from superstition

as any man living, neither do I give heed to dreams in general, as predictive, though particular dreams I believe to be so. Some very sensible persons, and, I suppose, Mrs. Carter among them, will acknowledge that in old times God spoke by dreams, but affirm with much boldness, that he has since ceased to do so. If you ask them why? They answer, because he has now revealed his will in the scripture, and there is no longer any need that he should instruct or admonish us by dreams. I grant that with respect to doctrines and precepts he has left us in want of nothing; but has he thereby precluded himself in any of the operations of his Providence? Surely not. It is perfectly a different consideration; and the same need that there ever was of his interference in this way, there is still, and ever must be, while man continues blind and fallible, and a creature beset with dangers, which he can neither foresee nor obviate. His operations however of this kind are, I allow, very rare; and as to the generality of dreams, they are made of such stuff, and are in themselves so insignificant, that though I believe them all to be the manufacture of others, not our own, I account it not a farthing-matter who manufactures them. So much for dreams!

My fever is not yet gone, but sometimes seems to leave me. It is altogether of the nervous kind, and attended, now and then, with much dejection.

A young gentleman called here yesterday, who came six miles out of his way to see me. He was on a journey to London from Glasgow, having just left the university there. He came, I suppose, partly to satisfy his own curiosity, but chiefly, as it seemed, to bring me the thanks of some of the Scotch professors for my two volumes. His name is Rose, an Englishman. Your spirits being good, you will derive more pleasure from this incident than I can at present, therefore I send it.

Adieu,

Very affectionately,

W. C.

LETTER XXIV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, July 24, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

This is the first time I have written these six months, and nothing but the constraint of obligation could induce me to write now. I cannot be so wanting to myself as not to endeavour, at least, to thank you both for the visits, with which you have favored me, and the poems that you sent me; in my present state of mind I taste nothing, nevertheless I read, partly from habit, and partly because it is the only thing that I am capable of.

I have therefore read Burns' poems, and have read them twice; and though they be written in a language that is new to me, and many of them on subjects much inferior to the author's ability, I think them on the whole a very extraordinary production. He is, I believe, the only poet these kingdoms have produced in the lower rank of life, since Shakespeare (I should rather say since Prior) who need not be indebted for any part of his praise to a charitable consideration of his origin, and the disadvantages under which he has

laboured. It will be a pity if he should not hereafter divest himself of barbarism, and content himself with writing pure English, in which he appears perfectly qualified to excel. He who can command admiration, dishonours himself if he aims no higher than to raise a laugh.

I am, dear Sir, with my best wishes for your prosperity, and with Mrs. Unwin's respects,

Your obliged and affectionate humble servant.

W. C.

LETTER XXV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Aug. 27, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I have not yet taken up the pen again, except to write to you. The little taste that I have had of your company, and your kindness in finding me out, make me wish that we were nearer neighbours, and that there were not so great a disparity in our years. That is to say, not that you were older, but that I were younger. Could we

have met in early life, I flatter myself that we might have been more intimate than now we are likely to be. But you shall not find me slow to cultivate such a measure of your regard, as your friends of your own age can spare me. When your route shall lie through this country, I shall hope that the same kindness which has prompted you twice to call on me, will prompt you again, and I shall be happy if on a future occasion, I may be able to give you a more cheerful reception, than can be expected from an invalide. My health and spirits are considerably improved, and I once more associate with my neighbours. My head however has been the worst part of me, and still continues so; is subject to giddiness and pain, maladies very unfavorable to poetical employment; but a preparation of the bark, which I take regularly, has so far been of service to me in those respects, as to encourage in me a hope, that by perseverance in the use of it, I may possibly find myself qualified to resume the translation of Homer.

When I cannot walk, I read, and read perhaps more than is good for me. But I cannot be idle. The only mercy that I shew myself in this respect, is, that I read nothing, that requires much closeness of application. I lately finished the perusal of a book, which

in former years I have more than once attacked, but never till now conquered; some other book always interfered, before I could finish it. The work I mean is Barclay's Argenis; and, if ever you allow yourself to read for mere amusement, I can recommend it to you (provided you have not already perused it) as the most amusing romance that ever was written. It is the only one indeed of an old date that I ever had the patience to go through with. It is interesting in a high degree; richer in incident than can be imagined, full of surprizes, which the reader never forestalls, and yet free from all entanglement and confusion. The stile too appears to me to be such, as would not dishonor Tacitus himself.

Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country, through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbour of mine. But his uncouth dialect spoiled all; and, before he had half read him through, he was quite *ram-feezled.*

W. C.

LETTER XXVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Aug. 30, 1787.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Though it costs me something to write, it would cost me more to be silent. My intercourse with my neighbours being renewed, I can no longer seem to forget how many reasons there are why you especially should not be neglected; no neighbour indeed, but the kindest of my friends, and ere long, I hope, an inmate.

My health and spirits seem to be mending daily. To what end I know not, neither will conjecture, but endeavour, as far as I can, to be content that they do so. I use exercise, and take the air in the park and wilderness. I read much, but as yet write not. Our friends at the Hall make themselves more and more amiable in our account, by treating us rather as old friends, than as friends newly acquired. There are few days in which we do not meet, and I am now almost as much at home in their house as in our own. Mr. Throckmorton, having long since put me in possession of all his ground, has now given me posses-

sion of his library. An acquisition of great value to me, who never have been able to live without books, since I first knew my letters, and who have no books of my own. By his means I have been so well supplied that I have not yet even looked at the Lounger, for which however I do not forget that I am obliged to you. *His* turn comes next, and I shall probably begin him to-morrow.

Mr. George Throckmorton is at the Hall. I thought I had known these brothers long enough to have found out all their talents and accomplishments. But I was mistaken. The day before yesterday, after having walked with us, they *carried* us up to the library (a more accurate writer would have said, *conducted* us) and then they shewed me the contents of an immense port-folio, the work of their own hands. It was furnished with drawings of the architectural kind, executed in a most masterly manner, and among others, contained outside and inside views of the Panthoon, I mean the Roman one. They were all, I believe, made at Rome. Some men may be estimated at a first interview, but the Throckmortons must be seen often, and known long, before one can understand all their value.

They often enquire after you, and ask me

whether you visit Weston this autumn. I answer, yes, and I charge you, my dearest Cousin, to authenticate my information. Write to me, and tell us when we may expect to see you. We were disappointed that we had no letter from you this morning. You will find me coated and buttoned according to your recommendation.

I write but little, because writing is become new to me; but I shall come on by degrees. Mrs Unwin begs to be affectionately remembered to you. She is in tolerable health, which is the chief comfort here that I have to boast of.

Yours, my dearest Cousin, as ever,

W. C.

LETTER XXVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 4, 1787.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Come, when thou canst come, secure of being always welcome! All, that is here is thine, together with the hearts of those,

who dwell here. I am only sorry that your journey hither is necessarily postponed beyond the time when I did hope to have seen you, sorry too that my Uncle's infirmities are the occasion of it. But years *will* have their course, and their effect; they are happiest, so far as this life is concerned, who like him escape those effects the longest, and who do not grow old before their time. Trouble and anguish do that for some, which only longevity does for others. A few months since I was older than your Father is now, and though I have lately recovered, as Falstaff says, *some smatch of my youth*, I have but little confidence, in truth none, in so flattering a change, but expect, *when I least expect it*, to wither again. The past is a pledge for the future.

Mr. G. is here, Mrs. Throckmorton's Uncle. He is lately arrived from Italy, where he has resided several years, and is so much the gentleman that it is impossible to be more so. Sensible, polite, obliging; slender in his figure, and in manners most engaging; —every way worthy to be related to the Throckmortons.

I have read Savary's travels into Egypt; Memoirs du Baron de Tott; Fenn's original letters; the

letters of Frederick of Bohemia, and am now reading Memoirs d' Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Guise. I have also read Barclay's Argenis, a Latin romance, and the best romance that ever was written. All these, together with Madan's letters to Priestly, and several pamphlets, within these two months. So I am a great reader.

W. C.

LETTER XXVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 15, 1787

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

On Monday last I was invited to meet your friend Miss J———, at the Hall, and there we found her. Her good nature, her humourous manner, and her good sense, are charming, insomuch that even I, who was never much addicted to speech-making, and who at present find myself particularly indisposed to it, could not help saying at parting, I am glad that I have seen you, and sorry that I have seen so little of you. We were sometimes many in company; on Thursday we were

fifteen, but we had not altogether so much vivacity and cleverness as Miss J——, whose talent at mirth-making has this rare property to recommend it, that nobody suffers by it.

I am making a gravel walk for winter use, under a warm hedge in the orchard. It shall be furnished with a low seat for your accommodation, and if you do but like it I shall be satisfied. In wet weather, or rather after wet weather, when the street is dirty, it will suit you well, for laying on an easy declivity through its whole length, it must of course be immediately dry.

You are very much wished for by our friends at the Hall—how much by me I will not tell you till the second week in October.

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER XXIX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 29, 1787.

MY DEAR COZ.

I thank you for your political intelligence; retired as we are, and seemingly excluded from the world, we are not indifferent to what passes in it; on the contrary, the arrival of a news-paper, at the present juncture, never fails to furnish us with a theme for discussion, short indeed, but satisfactory, for we seldom differ in opinion.

I have received such an impression of the Turks, from the memoirs of Baron de Tott, which I read lately, that I can hardly help presaging the conquest of that empire by the Russians. The disciples of Mahomet are such babies in modern tactics, and so enervated by the use of their favorite drug; so fatally secure in their predestinarian dream, and so prone to a spirit of mutiny against their leaders, that nothing less can be expected. In fact, they had not been their own masters at this day, had but the Russians known the weakness of their enemies half so

well as they undoubtedly know it now. Add to this, that there is a popular prophecy current in both countries, that Turkey is one day to fall under the Russian sceptre. A prophecy, which, from whatever authority it be derived, as it will naturally encourage the Russians, and dispirit the Turks, in exact proportion to the degree of credit it has obtained on both sides, has a direct tendency to effect its own accomplishment. In the mean time, if I wish them conquered, it is only because I think it will be a blessing to them to be governed by any other hand than their own. For under Heaven has there never been a throne so execrably tyrannical as theirs. The heads of the innocent that have been cut off to gratify the humour or caprice of their tyrants, could they be all collected and discharged against the walls of their city, would not leave one stone on another.

Oh that you were here this beautiful day! It is too fine by half to be spent in London. I have a perpetual din in my head, and though I am not deaf, hear nothing aright, neither my own voice, nor that of others. I am under a tub, from which tub accept my best love. Yours,

W. C.

LETTER XXX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Oct. 19, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

A summons from Johnson, which I received yesterday, calls my attention once more to the business of translation. Before I begin I am willing to catch though but a short opportunity to acknowledge your last favor. The necessity of applying myself with all diligence to a long work that has been but too long interrupted, will make my opportunities of writing rare in future.

Air and exercise are necessary to all men, but particularly so to the man, whose mind labours, and to him who has been all his life accustomed to much of both, they are necessary in the extreme. My time, since we parted, has been devoted entirely to the recovery of health and strength for this service, and I am willing to hope with good effect. Ten months have passed since I discontinued my poetical efforts; I do not expect to find the same readiness as before, till exercise of the neglected faculty, such as it is, shall have restored it to me.

You find yourself, I hope, by this time as comfortably situated in your new abode, as in a new abode one can be. I enter perfectly into all your feelings on occasion of the change. A sensible mind cannot do violence even to a local attachment without much pain. When my Father died, I was young, too young, to have reflected much. He was Rector of Berkhamsted, and there I was born. It had never occurred to me that a parson has no fee-simple in the house and glebe he occupies. There was neither tree, nor gate, nor stile, in all that country, to which I did not feel a relation, and the house itself I preferred to a palace. I was sent for from London to attend him in his last illness, and he died just before I arrived. Then, and not till then, I felt for the first time that I and my native place were disunited for ever, I sighed a long adieu to fields and woods, from which I once thought I should never be parted, and was at no time so sensible of their beauties, as just when I left them all behind me, to return no more.

W. C.

LETTER XXXI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 10, 1787.

The parliament, my dearest Cousin, prorogued continually, is a meteor dancing before my eyes, promising me my wish only to disappoint me, and none but the king and his ministers can tell when you and I shall come together. I hope however that the period, though so often postponed, is not far distant, and that once more I shall behold you, and experience your power to make winter gay and sprightly.

I have a kitten, the drollest of all creatures, that ever wore a cat's skin. Her gambols are not to be described, and would be incredible, if they could. In point of size she is likely to be a kitten always, being extremely small of her age, but time, I suppose, that spoils every thing, will make her also a cat. You will see her, I hope, before that melancholy period shall arrive, for no wisdom that she may gain by experience and reflection hereafter, will compensate the loss of her present hilarity. She is dressed in a tortoise-shell suit, and I know that you will delight in her.

Mrs. Throckmorton carries us to-morrow in her chaise to Chichely. The event however must be supposed to depend on elements, at least on the state of the atmosphere, which is turbulent beyond measure. Yesterday it thundered, last night it lightened, and at three this morning I saw the sky as red as a city in flames could have made it. I have a leech in a bottle that foretells all these prodigies and convulsions of nature. No, not as you will naturally conjecture, by articulate utterance of oracular notices, but by a variety of gesticulations, which here I have not room to give an account of. Suffice it to say, that no change of weather surprises him, and that in point of the earliest and most accurate intelligence, he is worth all the barometers in the world. None of them all indeed can make the least pretence to foretell thunder——a species of capacity of which he has given the most unequivocal evidence. I gave but six-pence for him, which is a groat more than the market price, though he is in fact, or rather would be, if leeches were not found in every ditch, an invaluable acquisition.

W. C.

THE

RETIRED CAT.*

A poet's Cat, sedate and grave,
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to enquire
For nooks, to which she might retire,
And where secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick——
Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould PHILOSOPHIQUE;
Or else she learn'd it of her master.
Sometimes ascending, debonair,
An apple-tree, or lofty pear,
Lodg'd with convenience in the fork,
She watch'd the gard'ner at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought,
In an old empty wat'ring pot,

* *NOTE BY THE EDITOR.*

As the kitten mentioned in this letter was probably in her advanced life the heroine of a little sportive moral poem, it may be introduced perhaps not improperly here.

There wanting nothing, save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan,
Apparell'd in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change it seems has place
Not only in our wiser race;
Cats also feel as well as we
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Expos'd her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within:
She therefore wish'd instead of those,
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.

A draw'r, (it chanc'd, at bottom lin'd
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the lady's use,)
A draw'r impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the top-most chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there.

Puss with delight beyond expression,
Survey'd the scene, and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease, ere long,
And lull'd by her own hum-drum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
By no malignity impell'd,
But all unconscious whom it held.

Awaken'd by the shock (cried puss)
" Was ever cat attended thus!
" The open draw'r was left I see
" Merely to prove a nest for me,
" For soon as I was well compos'd,
" Then came the maid, and it was clos'd:
" How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet,
" Oh what a delicate retreat!
" I will resign myself to rest
" 'Till Sol, declining in the west,
" Shall call to supper; when, no doubt
" Susan will come, and let me out.

The evening came, the sun descended,
And puss remain'd still unattended.
The night roll'd tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day)

The sprightly morn her course renew'd,
The evening grey again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before.
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,
She now presag'd approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink, or purr'd,
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.

That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching,
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said ——" what's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied.
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd,
Something imprison'd in the chest,
And doubtful what, with prudent care,
Resolv'd it should continue there.
At length a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consol'd him, and dispell'd his fears;
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the draw'rs explore,
The lowest first, and without stop,
The rest in order to the top.

For 'tis a truth, well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In ev'ry cranny but the right.
Forth skipped the cat; not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension,
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cur'd of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Any thing rather than a chest;
Then stept the poet into bed,
With this reflection in his head.

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence!
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around, in all that's done,
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn, in school of tribulation,
The folly of his expectation.

LETTER XXXII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Nov. 16, 1787.

I thank you for the solicitude, that you express on the subject of my present studies. The work is undoubtedly long and laborious, but it has an end, and proceeding leisurely, with a due attention to the use of air and exercise, it is possible that I may live to finish it. Assure yourself of one thing, that though to a bystander it may seem an occupation surpassing the powers of a constitution, never very athletic, and, at present, not a little the worse for wear, I can invent for myself no employment that does not exhaust my spirits more. I will not pretend to account for this, I will only say, that it is not the language of predilection for a favorite amusement, but that the fact is really so. I have even found that those plaything-avocations which one may execute almost without any attention, fatigue me, and wear away, while such as engage me much, and attach me closely, are rather serviceable to me than otherwise.

W. C.

LETTER XXXIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 27, 1787.

It is the part of wisdom, my dearest Cousin, to sit down contented under the demands of necessity, because they are such. I am sensible that you cannot, in my Uncle's present infirm state, and of which it is not possible to expect any considerable amendment, indulge either us, or yourself, with a journey to Weston. Yourself, I say, both because I know it will give you pleasure to see *Causidice mi** once more, especially in the comfortable abode where you have placed him, and because after so long an imprisonment in London, you, who love the country, and have a taste for it, would of course be glad to return to it. For my own part, to me it is ever new, and though I have now been an inhabitant of this village a twelvemonth, and have during the half of that time been at liberty to expatiate, and to make discoveries, I am daily finding out

* The appellation which Sir Thomas Hesketh used to give him in jest, when he was of the Temple.

fresh scenes and walks, which you would never be satisfied with enjoying——some of them are unapproachable by you either on foot on in your carriage. Had you twenty toes (whereas I suppose you have but ten) you could not reach them; and coach wheels have never been seen there since the flood. Before it indeed, (as Burnet says, that the earth was then perfectly free from all inequalities in its surface) they might have been seen there every day. We have other walks both upon hill tops, and in vallies beneath, some of which by the help of your carriage, and many of them without its help, would be always at your command.

On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows: "Sir, I am clerk of "the parish of All-saints in Northampton; brother "of Mr. C. the upholsterer. It is customary for the "person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality "which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. "You will do me a great favor, Sir, if you [illegible] "furnish me with one." To this I replied, "C, you have several men of genius [illegible],

" why have you not applied to some of them?
" There is a namesake of yours in particular, C——,
" the statuary, who, every body knows, is a first-
" rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all
" the world for your purpose."—" Alas! Sir, I have
" heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a
" gentleman of so much reading, that the people of
" our town cannot understand him." I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason. But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The waggon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary stile. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals! I have written *one*, that serves *two hundred* persons.

A few days since I received a second very obliging letter from Mr. M——. He tells me that his own papers, which are by far, he is sorry to say

it, the most numerous, are marked V. I. Z. Accordingly, my dear, I am happy to find that I am engaged in a correspondence with Mr. Viz, a gentleman for whom I have always entertained the profoundest veneration. But the serious fact is, that the papers distinguised by those signatures, have ever pleased me most, and struck me as the work of a sensible man, who knows the world well, and has more of Addison's delicate humour than any body.

A poor man begged food at the Hall lately. The cook gave him some vermicelli soup. He laded it about some time with the spoon, and then returned it to her saying, "I am a poor man it is true, and I "am very hungry, but yet I cannot eat broth with "maggots in it." Once more, my dear, a thousand thanks for your box full of good things, useful things, and beautiful things.

Yours ever,

W. C.

LETTER XXXIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1787.

I am glad, my dearest Coz. that my last letter proved so diverting. You may assure yourself of the literal truth of the whole narration, and that however droll, it was not in the least indebted to any embellishments of mine.

You say well, my dear, that in Mr. Throckmorton we have a peerless neighbour; we have so. In point of information upon all important subjects, in respect too of expression and address, and in short, every thing that enters into the idea of a gentleman, I have not found his equal, not often, any where. Were I asked who in my judgment approaches nearest to him, in all his amiable qualities, and qualifications, I should certainly answer his brother George, who if he be not his exact counterpart, endued with precisely the same measure of the same accomplishments, is nevertheless deficient in none of them, and is of a character singularly agreeable, in respect of a certain manly, I had almost said, heroic frankness, with which his

air strikes one almost immediately. So far as his opportunities have gone, he has ever been as friendly and obliging to us, as we could wish him, and were he lord of the Hall to-morrow, would I dare say, conduct himself toward us in such a manner, as to leave us as little sensible as possible, of the removal of its present owners. But all this I say, my dear, merely for the sake of stating the matter as it is; not in order to obviate, or, to prove the inexpedience of any future plans of yours, concerning the place of our residence. Providence and time, shape every thing; I should rather say Providence alone, for time has often no hand in the wonderful changes that we experience; they take place in a moment. It is not therefore worth while perhaps to consider much what we will, or will not do in years to come, concerning which all that I can say with certainty at present, is, that those years will be the most welcome, in which I can see the most of you.

W. C.

LETTER XXXV.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Dec. 6, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A short time since by the help of Mrs. Throckmorton's chaise, Mrs. Unwin and I reached Chichely, "Now" said I to Mrs. Chester "I shall write boldly to your Brother Walter, and will "do it immediately. I have passed the gulph that "parted us, and he will be glad to hear it." But let not the man who translates Homer be so presumptuous as to have a will of his own, or to promise any thing. A fortnight has, I suppose, elapsed since I paid this visit, and I am only now beginning to fulfil what I then undertook to accomplish without delay. The old Grecian must answer for it.

I spent my morning there so agreeably, that I have ever since regretted more sensibly that there are five miles of a dirty country interposed between us. For the increase of my pleasure, I had the good fortune to find your Brother the Bishop there. We had much talk about many things, but most, I believe, about Homer; and great satisfaction it gave me to

find that on the most important points of that subject his Lordship and I were exactly of one mind. In the course of our conversation he produced from his pocket-book a translation of the first ten or twelve lines of the Iliad, and in order to leave my judgment free, informed me kindly at the same time that they were not his own. I read them, and according to the best of my recollection of the original, found them well executed. The Bishop indeed acknowledged that they were not faultless, neither did I find them so. Had they been such, I should have felt their perfection as a discouragement hardly to be surmounted; for at that passage I have laboured more abundantly than at any other, and hitherto with the least success. I am convinced that Homer placed it at the threshold of his work as a scare-crow to all translators. Now, Walter, if thou knowest the author of this version, and it be not treason against thy Brother's confidence in thy secrecy, declare him to me. Had I been so happy as to have seen the Bishop again before he left this country, I should certainly have asked him the question, having a curiosity upon the matter that is extremely troublesome.

The awkward situation in which you found yourself on receiving a visit from an authoress, whose

works, though presented to you long before, you had never read, made me laugh, and it was no sin against my friendship for you to do so. It was a ridiculous distress, and I can laugh at it even now. I hope she catechized you well. How did you extricate yourself?——Now laugh at me. The clerk of the parish of All Saints, in the town of Northampton, having occasion for a poet, has appointed me to the office. I found myself obliged to comply. The bell-man comes next, and then, I think, though even borne upon your swan's quill, I can soar no higher!

I am, my dear friend, faithfully yours,

W. C.

LETTER XXXVI.

To Lady HESKETH,

The Lodge, Dec. 10, 1787.

I thank you for the snip of cloth, commonly called a pattern. At present I have two coats, and but one back. If at any time here-

after, I should find myself possessed of fewer coats, or more backs, it will be of use to me.

Even as you suspect, my dear, so it proved. The ball was prepared for, the ball was held, and the ball passed, and we had nothing to do with it. Mrs. Throckmorton knowing our trim, did not give us the pain of an invitation, for a pain it would have been. And why? as Sternhold says——because, as Hopkins answers, we must have refused it. But it fell out singularly enough, that this ball was held, of all days in the year, on my birth-day—and so I told them—but not till it was all over.

Though I have thought proper never to take any notice of the arrival of my MSS. together with the *other good things* in the box, yet certain it is that I received them. I have furbished up the tenth book till it is as bright as silver, and am now occupied in bestowing the same labour upon the eleventh. The twelfth and thirteenth are in the hands of ——, and the fourteenth and fifteenth are ready to succeed them. This notable job is the delight of my heart, and how sorry shall I be when it is ended.

The smith and the carpenter, my dear, are both in the room, hanging a bell, if I therefore make

a thousand blunders, let the said intruders answer for them all.

I thank you, my dear, for your history of the G——s. What changes in that family! And how many thousand families have in the same time experienced changes as violent as theirs! The course of a rapid river is the justest of all emblems to express the variableness of our scene below. Shakespear says, none ever bathed himself twice in the same stream, and it is equally true, that the world upon which we close our eyes at night, is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning.

I do not always say, give my love to my Uncle, because he knows that I always love him. I do not always present Mrs. Unwin's love to you, partly for the same reason, (Deuce take the smith and the carpenter) and partly because I forget it. But to present my own, I forget never, for I always have to finish my letter, which I know not how to do, my dearest Coz. without telling you, that I am

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER XXXVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Dec. 13, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Unless my memory deceives me, I forewarned you that I should prove a very unpunctual correspondent. The work that lies before me, engages unavoidably my whole attention. The length of it, the spirit of it, and the exactness, that is requisite to its due performance, are so many most interesting subjects of consideration to me, who find that my best attempts are only introductory to others, and that what to-day I suppose finished, to-morrow I must begin again. Thus it fares with a translator of Homer. To exhibit the majesty of such a poet in a modern language, is a task that no man can estimate the difficulty of till he attempts it. To paraphrase him loosely, to hang him with trappings that do not belong to him, all this is comparatively easy. But to represent him with only his own ornaments, and still to preserve his dignity, is a labour that, if I hope in any measure to achieve it, I am sensible can only be achieved by the most assiduous, and

most unremitting attention. Our studies, however different in themselves, in respect of the means by which they are to be successfully carried on, bear some resemblance to each other. A perserverance that nothing can discourage, a minuteness of observation that suffers nothing to escape, and a determination not to be seduced from the strait line that lies before us, by any images, with which fancy may present us, are essentials that should be common to us both. There are, perhaps, few arduous undertakings that are not in fact more arduous than we at first supposed them. As we proceed, difficulties increase upon us, but our hopes gather strength also, and we conquer difficulties which could we have foreseen them, we should never have had the boldness to encounter. May this be our experience, as I doubt not that it will. You possess by nature all that is necessary to success in the profession that you have chosen. What remains is in your own power. They say of poets that they must be born such: so must mathematicians, so must great generals, and so must lawyers, and so indeed must men of all denominations, or it is not possible that they should excel. But with whatever faculties we are born, and to whatever studies our genius may direct us, studies they must still be.

I am persuaded that Milton did not write his Paradise Lost, nor Homer his Iliad, nor Newton his Principia, without immense labour. Nature gave them a bias to their respective pursuits, and that strong propensity, I suppose, is what we mean by genius. The rest they gave themselves. "Macte esto," therefore have no fears for the issue!

I have had a second kind letter from your friend Mr. ——, which I have just answered. I must not I find hope to see him here, at least I must not much expect it. He has a family that does not permit him to fly southward. I have also a notion that we three could spend a few days comfortably together, especially in a country like this, abounding in scenes with which I am sure you would both be delighted. Having lived till lately at some distance from the spot that I now inhabit, and having never been master of any sort of vehicle whatever, it is but just now that I begin myself to be acquainted with the beauties of our situation. To you I may hope, one time or other, to show them, and shall be happy to do it, when an opportunity offers.

Yours, most affectionately,

W. C.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 1, 1788.

Now for another story almost incredible! A story, that would be quite such, if it was not certain that you give me credit for any thing. I have read the poem for the sake of which you sent the paper, and was much entertained by it. You think it perhaps, as very well you may, the only piece of that kind that was ever produced. It is indeed original, for I dare say Mr. Merry never saw mine; but certainly it is not unique. For most true it is, my dear, that ten years since, having a letter to write to a friend of mine, to whom I could write any thing, I filled a whole sheet with a composition, both in measure and in manner, precisely similar. I have in vain searched for it. It is either burnt or lost. Could I have found it, you would have had double postage to pay. For that one man in Italy, and another in England, who never saw each other, should stumble on a species of verse, in which no other man ever wrote (and I believe that to be

the case) and upon a style and manner too, of which, I suppose, that neither of them had ever seen an example, appears to me so extraordinary a fact, that I must have sent you mine, whatever it had cost you, and am really vexed that I cannot authenticate the story by producing a voucher. The measure I recollect to have been perfectly the same, and as to the manner I am equally sure of that, and from this circumstance, that Mrs. Unwin and I never laughed more at any production of mine, perhaps not even at John Gilpin. But for all this, my dear, you must, as I said, give me credit; for the thing itself is gone to that limbo of vanity, where alone, says Milton, things lost on earth are to be met with. Said limbo is, as you know, in the moon, whither I could not at present convey myself without a good deal of difficulty and inconvenience.

This morning being the morning of new year's day, I sent to the Hall, a copy of verses, addressed to Mrs. Throckmorton, entitled, the Wish, or the Poet's New Year's Gift. We dine there to-morrow, when, I suppose, I shall hear news of them. Their kindness is so great, and they seize with such eagerness every opportunity of doing all they think will please us,

that I held myself almost in duty bound to treat them with this stroke of my profession.

The small-pox has done, I believe, all that it has to do at Weston. Old folks, and even women with child, have been inoculated. We talk of our freedom, and some of us are free enough, but not the poor. Dependant as they are upon parish bounty, they are sometimes obliged to submit to impositions which, perhaps, in France itself, could hardly be paralleled. Can man or woman be said to be free, who is commanded to take a distemper, sometimes at least mortal, and in circumstances most likely to make it so? No circumstance whatever was permitted to exempt the inhabitants of Weston. The old as well as the young, and the pregnant as well as they who had only themselves within them, have been inoculated. Were I asked who is the most arbitrary sovereign on earth? I should answer, neither the king of France, nor the grand signior, but an overseer of the poor in England.

I am as heretofore occupied with Homer: my present occupation is the revisal of all I have done, viz. of the first fifteen books. I stand amazed at my own increasing dexterity in the business, being verily

persuaded that as far as I have gone, I have improved the work to double its value.

That you may begin the new year, and end it in all health and happiness, and many more when the present shall have been long an old one, is the ardent wish of Mrs. Unwin, and of yours, my dearest Coz. most cordially,

W. C.

LETTER XXXIX.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 5, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your information concerning the author of the translation of those lines. Had a man of less note and ability than Lord Bagot produced it, I should have been discouraged. As it is, I comfort myself with the thought that even he accounted it an achievement worthy of his powers, and that even he found it difficult. Though I never had the honor to be known to his Lordship, I remember him well at Westminster, and the reputa-

tion in which he stood there. Since that time I have never seen him, except once, many years ago, in the House of Commons, when I heard him speak on the subject of a drainage bill, better than any member there.

My first thirteen books have been criticised in London; have been by me accommodated to those criticisms, returned to London in their improved state, and sent back to Weston with an imprimantur. This would satisfy some poets, less anxious than myself about what they expose in public; but it has not satisfied me. I am now revising them again by the light of my own critical taper, and make more alterations than at the first. But are they improvements? you will ask—Is not the spirit of the work endangered by all this attention to correctness? I think and hope that it is not. Being well aware of the possibility of such a catastrophe, I guard particularly against it. Where I find that a servile adherence to the original would render the passage less animated than it should be, I still as at the first, allow myself a liberty. On all other occasions I prune with an unsparing hand, determined that there shall not be found in the whole translation an idea that is not Homer's. My ambition is to produce the closest copy possible, and

at the same time as harmonious as I know how to make it. This being my object, you will no longer think, if indeed you have thought it at all, that I am unnecessarily and over-much industrious. The original surpasses every thing, it is of an immense length, is composed in the best language ever used upon earth, and deserves, indeed demands, all the labour that any translator, be he who he may, can possibly bestow on it. Of this I am sure, and your Brother the good Bishop is of the same mind, that, at present, mere English readers know no more of Homer in reality, than if he had never been translated. That consideration indeed it was, which mainly induced me to the undertaking; and if after all, either through idleness, or dotage upon what I have already done, I leave it chargeable with the same incorrectness as my predecessors, or indeed with any other, that I may be able to amend, I had better have amused myself otherwise. And you I know are of my opinion.

I send you the clerk's verses of which I told you. They are very clerk-like as you will perceive. But plain truth in plain words seemed to me to be the ne plus ultra of composition on such an occasion. I might have attempted something very fine, but

then the persons principally concerned, viz. my readers, would not have understood me. If it puts them in mind that they are mortal, its best end is answered.

My dear Walter, adieu! yours faithfully,

W. C.

LETTER XL.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 19, 1788.

When I have prose enough to fill my paper, which is always the case when I write to you, I cannot find in my heart to give a third part of it to verse. Yet this I must do, or I must make my pacquets more costly than worshipful, by doubling the postage upon you, which I should hold to be unreasonable. See then the true reason why I did not send you that same scribblement till you desired it. The thought which naturally presents itself to me on all such occasions is this—Is not your Cousin coming? Why are you impatient? Will it not be time enough to shew her your fine things when she arrives?

Fine things indeed I have few. He who has Homer to transcribe may well be contented to do little else. As when an ass being harnessed with ropes to a sand cart, drags with hanging ears his heavy burthen, neither filling the long echoing streets with his harmonious bray, nor throwing up his heels behind, frolicksome and airy, as asses less engaged are wont to do; so I, satisfied to find myself indispensibly obliged to render into the best possible English metre, eight and forty Greek books, of which the two finest poems in the world consist, account it quite sufficient if I may at last achieve that labour, and seldom allow myself those pretty little vagaries, in which I should otherwise delight, and of which if I should live long enough, I intend hereafter to enjoy my fill.

This is the reason, my dear Cousin, if I may be permitted to call you so in the same breath with which I have uttered this truly heroic comparison; this is the reason why I produce at present but few occasional poems, and the preceding reason is that, which may account satisfactorily enough for my withholding the very few that I do produce. A thought sometimes strikes me before I rise; if it runs readily into verse, and I can finish it before breakfast, it is

well; otherwise it dies, and is forgotten; for all the subsequent hours are devoted to Homer.

The day before yesterday, I saw for the first time, Bunbury's new print, the propagation of a Lie. Mr. Throckmorton sent it for the amusement of our party. Bunbury sells humour by the yard, and is, I suppose the first vender of it who ever did so. He cannot therefore be said to have humour without measure(pardon a pun, my dear, from a man who has not made one before these forty years) though he may certainly be said to be immeasurably droll.

The original thought is good, and the exemplification of it in those very expressive figures, admirable. A poem on the same subject, displaying all that is displayed in those attitudes, and in those features, (for faces they can hardly be called) would be most excellent. The affinity of the two arts, viz. verse and painting, has been often observed; possibly the happiest illustration of it would be found, if some poet would ally himself to some draftsman, as Bunbury, and undertake to write every thing he should draw. Then let a musician be admitted of the party. He should compose the said poem, adapting notes to it exactly accommodated to the theme:

so should the sister arts be proved to be indeed sisters, and the world die of laughing.

W. C.

LETTER XLI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 30, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

It is a fortnight since I heard from you, that is to say, a week longer than you have accustomed me to wait for a letter. I do not forget that you have recommended it to me, on occasions somewhat similar, to banish all anxiety, and to ascribe your silence only to the interruptions of company. Good advice, my dear, but not easily taken by a man circumstanced as I am. I have learned in the school of adversity, a school from which I have no expectation that I shall ever be dismissed, to apprehend the worst, and have ever found it the only course in which I can indulge myself without the least danger of incurring a disappointment. This kind of experience, continued through many years, has given

me such an habitual bias to the gloomy side of every thing, that I never have a moment's ease on any subject to which I am not indifferent. How then can I be easy when I am left afloat upon a sea of endless conjectures, of which you furnish the occasion. Write I beseech you, and do not forget that I am now a battered actor upon this turbulent stage. That what little vigour of mind I ever had, of the self-supporting kind I mean, has long since been broken, and that though I can bear nothing well, yet any thing better than a state of ignorance concerning your welfare. I have spent hours in the night leaning upon my elbow and wondering what your silence means. I intreat you once more to put an end to these speculations, which cost me more animal spirits than I can spare; if you cannot without great trouble to yourself, which in your situation may very possibly be the case, contrive opportunities of writing so frequently as usual, only say it, and I am content. I will wait, if you desire it as long for every letter, but then let them arrive at the period once fixed, exactly at the time, for my patience will not hold out an hour beyond it.

W. C.

LETTER XLII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 1, 1788.

Pardon me, my dearest Cousin, the mournful ditty that I sent you last. There are times when I see every thing through a medium that distresses me, to an insupportable degree, and that letter was written in one of them. A fog that had for three days obliterated all the beauties of Weston, and a north-east wind, might possibly contribute not a little to the melancholy that indited it. But my mind is now easy, your letter has made it so, and I feel myself as blythe as a bird in comparison. I love you, my Cousin, and cannot suspect, either with or without cause, the least evil in which you may be concerned, without being greatly troubled! Oh trouble! The portion of all mortals—but mine in particular. Would I had never known thee, or could bid thee farewell for ever; for I meet thee at every turn, my pillows are stuffed with thee, my very roses smell of thee, and even my Cousin, who would cure me of all trouble if she could, is sometimes innocently the cause of trouble to me.

I now see the unreasonableness of my late trouble, and would, if I could trust myself so far, promise never again to trouble either myself or you in the same manner, unless warranted by some more substantial ground of apprehension.

What I said concerning Homer, my dear, was spoken, or rather written, merely under the influence of a certain jocularity that I felt at that moment. I am in reality so far from thinking myself an ass, and my translation a sand-cart, that I rather seem, in my own account of the matter, one of those flaming steeds harnessed to the chariot of Apollo, of which we read in the works of the antients. I have lately, I know not how, acquired a certain superiority to myself in this business, and in this last revisal have elevated the expression to a degree far surpassing its former boast. A few evenings since I had an opportunity to try how far I might venture to expect such success of my labours as can alone repay them, by reading the first book of my Iliad to a friend of ours. He dined with you once at Olney. His name is Greatheed, a man of letters and of taste. He dined with us, and the evening proving dark and dirty, we persuaded him to take a bed. I entertained him as I tell you. He heard me with great attention, and with evident

symptoms of the highest satisfaction, which when I had finished the exhibition, he put out of all doubt by expressions which I cannot repeat Only this he said to Mrs. Unwin while I was in another room, that he had never entered into the spirit of Homer before, nor had any thing like a due conception of his manner. This I have said knowing that it will please you, and will say no more.

Adieu! my dear, will you never speak of coming to Weston more?

W. C.

LETTER XLIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Feb. 14, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

Though it be long since I received your last, I have not yet forgotten the impression it made upon me, nor how sensibly I felt myself obliged by your unreserved and friendly communications. I will not apologize for my silence in

the interim, because, apprized as you are of my present occupation, the excuse that I might alledge will present itself to you of course, and to dilate upon it would therefore be waste of paper.

You are in possession of the best security imaginable, for the due improvement of your time, which is a just sense of its value. Had I been, when at your age, as much affected by that important consideration as I am at present, I should not have devoted, as I did, all the earliest parts of my life to amusement only. I am now in the predicament into which the thoughtlessness of youth betrays nine tenths of mankind, who never discover that the health and good spirits which generally accompany it, are in reality blessings only according to the use we make of them, till advanced years begin to threaten them with the loss of both. How much wiser would thousands have been, than now they ever will be, had a puny constitution, or some occasional infirmity, constrained them to devote those hours to study and reflection, which for want of some such check they have given entirely to dissipation! I, therefore, account you happy, who, young as you are, need not be informed that you cannot always be so, and who already know that the materials upon which age can

alone build its comfort, should be brought together at an earlier period. You have indeed in losing a father, lost a friend, but you have not lost his instructions. His example was not buried with him, but happily for you (happily because you are desirous to avail yourself of it) still lives in your remembrance, and is cherished in your best affections.

Your last letter was dated from the house of a gentleman, who was, I believe, my school-fellow. For the Mr. C———, who lived at Watford, while I had any connexion with Hartfordshire, must have been the father of the present, and according to his age, and the state of his health, when I saw him last, must have been long dead. I never was acquainted with the family further than by report, which always spoke honorably of them, though in all my journeys to and from my Father's, I must have passed the door. The circumstance however reminds me of the beautiful reflection of Glaucus in the sixth Iliad; beautiful as well for the affecting nature of the observation, as for the justness of the comparison, and the incomparable simplicity of the expression. I feel that I shall not be satisfied without transcribing it, and yet perhaps *my* Greek may be difficult to decypher.

Οιη περ Φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων.
Φυλλα τα μεν τ' ανεμος χαμαδις χεει, αλλα δε θ' υλη
Τηλεθοωσα Φυει, εαρος δ' επιγιγνεται ωρη.
Ως ανδρων γενεη, η μεν Φυει, η δ' απολησει.

Excuse this piece of pedantry in a man whose Homer is always before him! What would I give that he were living now, and within my reach! I, of all men living, have the best excuse for indulging such a wish, unreasonable as it may seem, for I have no doubt that the fire of his eye, and the smile of his lips, would put me now and then in possession of his full meaning more effectually than any commentator. I return you many thanks for the elegies which you sent me, both which I think deserving of much commendation. I should requite you but ill by sending you my mortuary verses, neither at present can I prevail on myself to do it, having no frank, and being conscious that they are not worth carriage without one. I have one copy left, and that copy I will keep for you.

W. C.

LETTER XLIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 16, 1785.

I have now three letters of yours, my dearest Cousin, before me, all written in the space of a week, and must be indeed insensible of kindness did I not feel yours on this occasion. I cannot describe to you, neither could you comprehend it if I should, the manner in which my mind is sometimes impressed with melancholy on particular subjects. Your late silence was such a subject. I heard, saw, and felt, a thousand terrible things, which had no real existence, and was haunted by them night and day till they at last extorted from me the doleful epistle which I have since wished had been burned before I sent it. But the cloud has passed, and, as far as you are concerned, my heart is once more at rest.

Before you gave me the hint, I had once or twice, as I lay on my bed, watching the break of day, ruminated on the subject which, in your last but one, you recommended to me.

Slavery, or a release from slavery, such as the poor negroes have endured, or perhaps both these topics together, appeared to me a theme so important at the present juncture, and at the same time so susceptible of poetical management, that I more than once perceived myself ready to start in that career, could I have allowed myself to desert Homer for so long a time as it would have cost me to do them justice.

While I was pondering these things, the public prints informed me that Miss More was on the point of publication, having actually finished what I had not yet begun.

The sight of her advertisement convinced me that my best course would be that to which I felt myself most inclined, to persevere without turning aside to attend to any other call, however alluring, in the business I have in hand.

It occurred to me likewise, that I have already borne my testimony in favor of my black brethren, and that I was one of the earliest, if not the first, of those, who have in the present day, expressed their detestation of the diabolical traffic in question.

On all these accounts I judged it best to be silent, and especially because I cannot doubt that some

effectual measures will now be taken to alleviate the miseries of their condition, the whole nation being in possession of the case, and it being impossible also to alledge an argument in behalf of man-merchandize that can deserve a hearing. I shall be glad to see Hannah More's poem; she is a favorite writer with me, and has more nerve and energy both in her thoughts and language than half the he rhymers in the kingdom. The Thoughts on the Manners of the Great will likewise be most acceptable. I want to learn as much of the world as I can, but to acquire that learning at a distance, and a book with such a title promises fair to serve the purpose effectually.

I recommend it to you, my dear, by all means to embrace the fair occasion, and to put yourself in the way of being squeezed and incommoded a few hours, for the sake of hearing and seeing what you will never have an opportunity to see and hear hereafter, the trial of a man who has been greater, and more feared, than the great Mogul himself. Whatever we are at home, we certainly have been tyrants in the East, and if these men have, as they are charged, rioted in the miseries of the innocent, and dealt death to the guiltless, with an unsparing hand, may they

receive a retribution that shall in future make all governors and judges of ours, in those distant regions, tremble. While I speak thus, I equally wish them acquitted. They were both my school-fellows, and for Hastings I had a particular value. Farewell.

W. C.

LETTER XLV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 23, 1788.

I do not wonder that your ears and feelings were hurt by Mr. Burke's severe invective. But you are to know, my dear, or probably you know it already, that the prosecution of public delinquents has always, and in all countries, been thus conducted. The stile of a criminal charge of this kind has been an affair settled among orators from the days of Tully to the present, and like all other practices that have obtained for ages, this in particular seems to have been founded originally in reason, and in the necessity of the case.

He who accuses another to the state, must not appear himself unmoved by the view of crimes, with which he charges them, lest he should be suspected of fiction, or of precipitancy, or of a consciousness that after all he shall not be able to prove his allegations. On the contrary, in order to impress the minds of his hearers with a persuasion that he himself at least is convinced of the criminality of the prisoner, he must be vehement, energetic, rapid; must call him tyrant, and traitor, and every thing else that is odious, and all this to his face, because all this, bad as it is, is no more than he undertakes to prove in the sequel, and if he cannot prove it, he must himself appear in a light very little more desirable, and at the best to have trifled with the tribunal to which he has summoned him.

Thus Tully in the very first sentence of his oration against Cataline, calls him a monster; a manner of address in which he persisted, till said monster, unable to support the fury of his accuser's eloquence any longer, rose from his seat, elbowed for himself a passage through the crowd, and at last burst from the senate house in an agony, as if the Furies themselves had followed him.

And now, my dear, though I have thus spoken,

and have seemed to plead the cause of that species of eloquence which you, and every creature who has your sentiments, must necessarily dislike, perhaps I am not altogether convinced of its propriety. Perhaps, at the bottom, I am much more of opinion, that if the charge unaccompanied by any inflammatory matter, and simply detailed, being once delivered into the court, and read aloud; the witnesses were immediately examined, and sentence pronounced according to the evidence, not only the process would be shortened, much time and much expence saved, but justice would have at least as fair play as now she has. Prejudice is of no use in weighing the question —guilty or not guilty—and the principal aim, end, and effect of such introductory harangues is to create as much prejudice as possible. When you and I, therefore, shall have the sole management of such a business entrusted to us, we will order it otherwise.

I was glad to learn from the papers that our Cousin Henry shone as he did in reading the charge. This must have given much pleasure to the General.

Thy ever affectionate,

W. C.

LETTER XLVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 3, 1788.

One day last week, Mrs. Unwin and I having taken our morning walk, and returning homeward through the wilderness, met the Throckmortons. A minute after we had met them, we heard the cry of hounds at no great distance, and mounting the broad stump of an elm, which had been felled, and by the aid of which we were enabled to look over the wall, we saw them. They were all that time in our orchard: presently we heard a terrier, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton, which you may remember by the name of Fury, yelping with much vehemence, and saw her running through the thickets within a few yards of us at her utmost speed, as if in pursuit of something which we doubted not was the fox. Before we could reach the other end of the wilderness, the hounds entered also; and when we arrived at the gate which opens into the grove, there we found the whole weary cavalcade assembled. The huntsman dismounting, begged leave to follow his

hounds on foot, for he was sure, he said, that they had killed him. A conclusion which I suppose he drew from their profound silence. He was accordingly admitted, and with a sagacity that would not have dishonored the best hound in the world, pursuing precisely the same track which the fox and the dogs had taken, though he had never had a glimpse of either after their first entrance through the rails, arrived where he found the slaughtered prey. He soon produced dead reynard, and rejoined us in the grove with all his dogs about him. Having an opportunity to see a ceremony, which I was pretty sure would never fall in my way again, I determined to stay, and to notice all that passed with the most minute attention. The huntsman having by the aid of a pitchfork lodged reynard on the arm of an elm, at the height of about nine feet from the ground, there left him for a considerable time. The gentlemen sat on their horses contemplating the fox, for which they had toiled so hard; and the hounds assembled at the foot of the tree, with faces not less expressive of the most rational delight, contemplated the same object. The huntsman remounted; cut off a foot, and threw it to the hounds—one of them swallowed it whole like a bolus. He then once more alighted,

and drawing down the fox by the hinder legs, desired the people, who were by this time rather numerous, to open a lane for him to the right and left. He was instantly obeyed, when throwing the fox to the distance of some yards, and screaming like a fiend, "tear him to pieces"—at least six times repeatedly, he consigned him ever absolutely to the pack, who in a few minutes devoured him completely. Thus, my dear, as Virgil says, what none of the gods could have ventured to promise me, time itself, pursuing its accustomed course, has of its own accord presented me with. I have been in at the death of a fox, and you now know as much of the matter as I, who am as well informed as any sportsman in England.

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER XLVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 12, 1788.

Slavery, and the Manners of the Great, I have read. The former I admired, as I

do all that Miss More writes, as well for energy of expression, as for the tendency of the design. I have never yet seen any production of her pen that has not recommended itself by both these qualifications. There is likewise much good sense in her manner of treating every subject, and no mere poetic cant (which is the thing that I abhor,) in her manner of treating any. And this I say, not because you now know and visit her, but it has long been my avowed opinion of her works, which I have both spoken and written, as often as I have had occasion to mention them.

Mr. Wilberforce's little book (if he was the author of it) has also charmed me. It must, I should imagine, engage the notice of those to whom it is addressed. In that case one may say to them, either answer it, or be set down by it. They will do neither. They will approve, commend, and forget it. Such has been the fate of all exhortations to reform, whether in verse or prose, and however closely pressed upon the conscience in all ages, here and there a happy individual, to whom God gives grace and wisdom to profit by the admonition, is the better for it. But the aggregate body (as Gilbert Cooper used to call the multitude) remain, though with a very good

understanding of the matter, like horse and mule that have none.

We shall now soon lose our neighbours at the Hall. We shall truly miss them, and long for their return. Mr. Throckmorton said to me last night, with sparkling eyes, and a face expressive of the highest pleasure—"We compared you this morning with "Pope; we read your fourth Iliad, and his, and I "verily think we shall beat him. He has many su- "perfluous lines, and does not interest one. When "I read your translation, I am deeply affected. I "see plainly your advantage, and am convinced that "Pope spoiled all by attempting the work in rhyme." His brother George, who is my most active amanuensis, and who indeed first introduced the subject, seconded all he said. More would have passed, but Mrs. Throckmorton having seated herself at the harpsichord, and for my amusement merely, my attention was of course turned to her. The new vicar of Olney is arrived, and we have exchanged visits. He is a plain, sensible man, and pleases me much. A treasure for Olney, if Olney can understand his value.

W. C.

LETTER XLVIII.

To General COWPER.

Weston, 1788.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

A letter is not pleasant which excites curiosity, but does not gratify it. Such a letter was my last, the defects of which I therefore take the first opportunity to supply. When the condition of our negroes in the islands was first presented to me as a subject for songs, I felt myself not at all allured to the undertaking: it seemed to offer only images of horror, which could by no means be accommodated to the style of that sort of composition. But having a desire to comply, if possible, with the request made to me, after turning the matter in my mind as many ways as I could, I at last, as I told you, produced three, and that which appears to myself the best of those three, I have sent you. Of the other two, one is serious, in a strain of thought perhaps rather too serious, and I could not help it. The other, of which the slave-trader is himself the subject, is somewhat ludicrous. If I could think them worth your seeing, I would, as opportunity should occur, send them also. If this amuses you I shall be glad.

W. C.

THE

MORNING DREAM.*

A BALLAD.

TO THE TUNE OF TWEED-SIDE.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
And the fresh blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
Never taught me by woman before:

* The excellence of this ballad induces me to reprint it here, although it has appeared in the last edition of Cowper's Poems.

She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cry'd——
"I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain,
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain
Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds which had over us hung
Fled, chas'd by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultur'd island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy stood,
Oppression his terrible name:
In his hand, as a sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey,
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land,
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbru'd.

I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expir'd,
Heard shouts, that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspir'd.

Awaking, how could I but muse,
At what such a dream should betide,
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which serv'd my weak thought for a guide——
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves,
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

LETTER XLIX.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

March 19, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The spring is come, but not I suppose that spring which our poets have celebrated. So I judge at least by the extreme severity of the season, sunless skies and freezing blasts, surpassing all that we experienced in the depth of winter.

How do you dispose of yourself in this howling month of March? As for me, I walk daily, be the weather what it may, take Bark, and write verses. By the aid of such means as these I combat the north-east wind with some measure of success, and look forward with the hope of enjoying it, to the warmth of summer.

Have you seen a little volume lately published, entitled the Manners of the Great? It is said to have been written by Mr. Wilberforce, but whether actually written by him or not, is undoubtedly the work of some man intimately acquainted with the subject, a gentleman, and a man of letters. If it makes the impression on those to whom it is addressed, that may be in some degree expected from his arguments, and from his manner of pressing them, it will be well. But you and I have lived long enough in the world to know that the hope of a general reformation in any class of men whatever, or of women either, may easily be too sanguine.

I have now given the last revisal to as much of my translation as was ready for it, and do not know that I shall bestow another single stroke of my pen on that part of it before I send it to the press. My business at present, is with the sixteenth book, in which I have made some progress, but have not yet

actually sent forth Patroclus to the battle. My first translation lies always before me; line by line I examine it as I proceed; and line by line reject it. I do not however hold myself altogether indebted to my critics for the better judgment that I seem to exercise in this matter now than in the first instance. By long study of him, I am in fact become much more familiar with Homer than any time heretofore, and have possessed myself of such a taste of his manner, as is not to be attained by mere cursory reading for amusement. But alas! 'tis after all a mortifying consideration that the majority of my judges hereafter, will be no judges of this. *Græcum est, non potest legi*, is a motto that would suit nine in ten of those who will give themselves airs about it, and pretend to like or to dislike. No matter. I know I shall please *you*, because I know *what* pleases you, and am sure that I have done it.

Adieu! my good friend,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

LETTER L.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, March 29, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I rejoice that you have so successfully performed so long a journey without the aid of hoofs or wheels. I do not know that a journey on foot exposes a man to more disasters than a carriage or a horse; perhaps it may be the safer way of travelling, but the novelty of it impressed me with some anxiety on your account.

It seems almost incredible to myself, that my company should be at all desirable to you, or to any man. I know so little of the world as it goes at present, and labour generally under such a depression of spirits, especially at those times when I could wish to be most cheerful, that my own share in every conversation appears to me to be the most insipid thing imaginable. But you say you found it otherwise, and I will not for my own sake doubt your sincerity, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, and since such is yours, I shall leave you in quiet possession of it, wishing indeed both its continuance and increase,

I shall not find a properer place in which to say, accept of Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgements, as well as mine, for the kindness of your expressions on this subject, and be assured of an undissembling welcome at all times, when it shall suit you to give us your company at Weston. As to her, she is one of the sincerest of the human race, and if she receives you with the appearance of pleasure, it is because she feels it. Her behaviour on such occasions is with her an affair of conscience, and she dares no more look a falsehood than utter one.

It is almost time to tell you, that I have received the books safe, they have not suffered the least detriment by the way, and I am much obliged to you for them. If my translation should be a little delayed in consequence of this favor of yours, you must take the blame on yourself. It is impossible not to read the notes of a commentator so learned, so judicious, and of so fine a taste as Dr. Clarke, having him at one's elbow. Though he has been but few hours under my roof I have already peeped at him, and find that he will be *instar omnium* to me. They are such notes exactly as I wanted. A translator of Homer should ever have somebody at hand to say, "that's a beauty," lest he should slumber where his

author does not, not only depreciating, by such inadvertency, the work of his original, but depriving perhaps his own of an embellishment, which wanted only to be noticed.

If you hear ballads sung in the streets on the hardships of the negroes in the islands, they are probably mine. It must be an honor to any man to have given a stroke to that chain, however feeble. I fear however, that the attempt will fail. The tidings which have lately reached me from London, concerning it, are not the most encouraging. While the matter slept, or was but slightly adverted to, the English only had their share of shame in common with other nations on account of it. But since it has been canvassed and searched to the bottom, since the public attention has been rivetted to the horrible scheme, we can no longer plead either that we did not know it, or did not think of it. Woe be to us if we refuse the poor captives the redress to which they had so clear a right, and prove ourselves in the sight of God and men, indifferent to all considerations but those of gain.

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER LI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 31, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Mrs. Throckmorton has promised to write to me. I beg that as often as you shall see her, you will give her a smart pinch, and say, "have you written to my Cousin?" I build all my hopes of her performance on this expedient, and for so doing these my letters, not patent, shall be your sufficient warrant. You are thus to give her the question till she shall answer, "Yes." I have written one more song, and sent it. It is called the Morning Dream, and may be sung to the tune of Tweed-Side, or any other tune that will suit it, for I am not nice on that subject. I would have copied it for you, had I not almost filled my sheet without it, but now my dear, you must stay till the sweet sirens of London shall bring it to you, or if that happy day should never arrive, I hereby acknowledge myself your debtor to that amount. I shall now probably cease to sing of tortured negroes, a theme which

never pleased me, but which in the hope of doing them some little service, I was not unwilling to handle.

If any thing could have raised Miss More to a higher place in my opinion that she possessed before, it could only be your information that after all, she, and not Mr. Wilberforce, is author of that volume. How comes it to pass, that she, being a woman, writes with a force and energy, and a correctness hitherto arrogated by the men, and not very frequently displayed even by the men themselves!

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER LII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 6, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

You ask me how I like Smollet's Don Quixote? I answer, well, perhaps better than any body's. But having no skill in the original some diffidence becomes me. That is to say I do not know whether I *ought* to prefer it or not. Yet

there is so little deviation from other versions of it which I have seen, that I do not much hesitate. It has made me laugh I know immoderately, and in such a case *c'a suffit.*

A thousand thanks, my dear for the new convenience in the way of stowage, which you are so kind as to intend me. There is nothing in which I am so deficient as repositories for letters, papers, and litter of all sorts. Your last present has helped me somewhat; but not with respect to such things as require lock and key, which are numerous. A box, therefore, so secured, will be to me an invaluable acquisition. And since you leave me to my option, what shall be the size thereof, I of course prefer a folio. On the back of the book-seeming box, some artist expert in those matters, may inscribe these words,

Collectanea curiosa.

The English of which is, a collection of curiosities. A title which I prefer to all others, because if I live, I shall take care that the box shall merit it, and because it will operate as an incentive to open that, which being locked cannot be opened. For in these

cases the greater the baulk, the more wit is discovered by the ingenious contriver of it, viz. myself.

The General I understand by his last letter is in town. In my last to him, I told him news, possibly it will give you pleasure, and ought for that reason to be made known to you as soon as possible. My friend Rowley, who I told you has after twenty-five years silence, renewed his correspondence with me, and who now lives in Ireland, where he has many and considerable connexions, has sent to me for thirty subscription papers. Rowley is one of the most benevolent and friendly creatures in the world, and will, I dare say, do all in his power to serve me.

I am just recovered from a violent cold, attended by a cough, which split my head while it lasted. I escaped these tortures, all the winter, but whose constitution or what skin can possibly be proof against our vernal breezes in England? Mine never were, nor will be.

When people are intimate, we say, they are as great as two inkle-weavers, on which expression I have to remark in the first place that the word *great* is here used in a sense which the corresponding term has not, so far as I know, in any other language—— and secondly, that inkle-weavers contract intimacies

with each other sooner than other people on account of their juxtaposition in weaving of inkle. Hence it is that Mr. Gregson and I emulate those happy weavers in the closeness of our connexion. We live near to each other, and while the Hall is empty are each others only extraforaneous comfort.

Most truly thine,

W. C.

LETTER LIII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston, May 8, 1788.

Alas! my library—I must now give it up for a lost thing for ever. The only consolation belonging to the circumstance is, or seems to be, that no such loss did ever befall any other man, or can ever befall me again. As far as books are concerned I am

"Totus teres atque rotundus,

and may set fortune at defiance. The books which

had been my Father's, had most of them, his arms on the inside cover, but the rest no mark, neither his name nor mine. I could mourn for them like Sancho for his Dapple, but it would avail me nothing.

You will oblige me much by sending me Crazy Kate. A gentleman last winter promised me both her and the Lace-maker, but he went to London, that place, in which, as in the grave, "all things are forgotten," and I have never seen either of them.

I begin to find some prospect of a conclusion, of the Iliad at least, now opening upon me, having reached the eighteenth book. Your letter found me yesterday in the very fact of dispersing the whole host of Troy, by the voice only of Achilles. There is nothing extravagant in the idea, for you have witnessed a similar effect attending even such a voice as mine at midnight, from a garret window, on the dogs of a whole parish, whom I have put to flight in a moment.

W. C.

LETTER LIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 12, 1788.

It is probable, my dearest Coz. that I shall not be able to write much, but as much as I can I will. The time between rising and breakfast is all that I can at present find, and this morning I lay longer than usual.

In the style of the lady's note to you I can easily perceive a smatch of her character. Neither men nor women write with such neatness of expression, who have not given a good deal of attention to language, and qualified themselves by study. At the same time it gave me much more pleasure to observe, that my Coz, though not standing on the pinnacle of renown quite so elevated, as that which lifts Mrs. Montagu to the clouds, falls in no degree short of her in this particular; so that should she make you a member of her academy, she will do it honor. Suspect me not of flattering you, for I abhor the thought; neither *will* you suspect it. Recollect, that it is an invariable rule with me never to pay compliments to those I love.

Two days, *en suite*, I have walked to Gayhurst: a longer journey than I have walked on foot these seventeen years. The first day I went alone, designing merely to make the experiment, and chusing to be at liberty to return at whatsoever point of my pilgrimage I should find myself fatigued. For I was not without suspicion that years, and some other things no less injurious than years, viz. melancholy and distress of mind, might by this time have unfitted me for such achievements. But I found it otherwise. I reached the church, which stands, as you know, in the garden, in fifty-five minutes, and returned in ditto time to Weston. The next day I took the same walk with Mr. Rowley, having a desire to shew him the prettiest place in the country. I not only performed these two excursions without injury to my health, but have by means of them gained indisputable proof that my ambulatory faculty is not yet impaired; a discovery which, considering that to my feet alone I am likely, as I have ever been, to be indebted always for my transportation from place to place, I find very delectable.

You will find in the Gentleman's Magazine, a sonnet, addressed to Henry Cowper, signed T. H. I am the writer of it. No creature knows

this but yourself; you will make what use of the intelligence you shall see good.

W. C.

LETTER LV.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

May 20, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

For two excellent prints I return you my sincere acknowledgments. I cannot say that poor Kate resembles much the original, who was neither so young, nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her; but she was a figure well suited to the account given of her in the Task, and has a face exceedingly expressive of despairing melancholy. The lace-maker is accidently a good likeness of a young woman, once our neighbour, who was hardly less handsome than the picture twenty years ago; but the loss of one husband, and the acquisition of another, have, since that time, impaired her much; yet she might still be supposed to have sat to the artist.

We dined yesterday with your friend and mine, the most companionable and domestic Mr. C——. The whole kingdom can hardly furnish a spectacle more pleasing to a man who has a taste for true happiness, than himself, Mrs. C——, and their multitudinous family. Seven long miles are interposed between us, or perhaps I should oftener have an opportunity of declaiming on this subject.

I am now in the nineteenth book of the Iliad, and on the point of displaying such feats of heroism performed by Achilles, as make all other achievements trivial. I may well exclaim, Oh! for a muse of fire! especially having not only a great host to cope with, but a great river also: much, however, may be done when Homer leads the way. I should not have chosen to have been the original author of such a business, even though all the nine had stood at my elbow. Time has wonderful effects. We admire that in an antient, for which we should send a modern bard to Bedlam.

I saw at Mr. C——'s a great curiosity; an antique bust of Paris in Parian marble. You will conclude that it interested me exceedingly. I pleased myself with supposing that it once stood in Helen's chamber. It was in fact brought from the Levant,

and though not well mended (for it had suffered much by time) is an admirable performance.

W. C.

LETTER LVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 27, 1788.

MY DEAR COZ.

The General, in a letter which came yesterday, sent me inclosed a copy of my sonnet; thus introducing it.

"I send a copy of verses somebody has writ-
"ten in the Gentleman's Magazine for April last.
"Independent of my partiality towards the subject,
"I think the lines themselves are good."

Thus it appears that my poetical adventure has succeeded to my wish, and I write to him by this post, on purpose to inform him that the somebody in question is myself.

I no longer wonder that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic veils his bonnet to her superior judgment. I am now reading, and have reached the middle of her Es-

say on the Genius of Shakespeare; a book of which, strange as it may seem, though I must have read it formerly, I had absolutely forgot the existence.

The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment, and the wit displayed in it, fully justify not only my compliment, but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents, or shall be paid hereafter. Voltaire, I doubt not, rejoiced that his antagonist wrote in English, and that his countrymen could not possibly be judges of the dispute. Could they have known how much she was in the right, and by how many thousand miles the bard of Avon is superior to all their dramatists, the French critic would have lost half his fame among them.

I saw at Mr. C——'s a head of Paris; an antique of Parian marble. His uncle who left him the estate, brought it, as I understand, from the Levant: you may suppose I viewed it with all the enthusiasm that belongs to a translator of Homer. It is in reality a great curiosity, and highly valuable.

Our friend Sephus has sent me two prints, the Lace-maker and Crazy Kate. These also I have contemplated with pleasure, having, as you know, a particular interest in them. The former of them is not more beautiful than a lace-maker, once our neigh-

bour at Olney; though the artist has assembled as many charms in her countenance as ever I saw in any countenance, one excepted. Kate is both younger and handsomer than the original from which I drew, but she is in a good style, and as mad as need be.

How does this hot weather suit thee, my dear in London? as for me, with all my colonades and bowers, I am quite oppressed by it.

W. C.

LETTER LVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 3, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

The excessive heat of these last few days was indeed oppressive; but excepting the languor that it occasioned both in my mind and body, it was far from being prejudicial to me. It opened ten thousand pores, by which as many mischiefs, the effects of long obstruction, began to breathe themselves forth abundantly. Then came an east wind, baneful to me at all times, but following

so closely such a sultry season, uncommonly noxious. To speak in the seaman's phrase, not entirely strange to you, *I was taken all aback;* and the humours which would have escaped, if old Eurus would have given them leave, finding every door shut, have fallen into my eyes. But in a country like this, poor miserable mortals must be content to suffer all, that sudden and violent changes can inflict; and if they are quit for about half the plagues that Caliban calls down on Prospero, they may say we are well off, and dance for joy, if the rheumatism or cramp will let them.

Did you ever see an advertisement by one Fowle, a dancing-master of Newport-Pagnel? If not, I will contrive to send it to you for your amusement. It is the most extravagantly ludicrous affair of the kind I ever saw. The author of it had the good hap to be crazed, or he had never produced any thing half so clever; for you will ever observe, that they who are said to have lost their wits, have more than other people. It is therefore only a slander with which envy prompts the malignity of persons in their senses to asperse wittier than themselves. But there are countries in the world where the mad have justice done them, where they are revered as the subjects of

inspiration, and consulted as oracles. Poor Fowle would have made a figure there.

W. C.

LETTER LVIII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston, June 8, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter brought me the very first intelligence of the event it mentions. My last letter from Lady Hesketh gave me reason enough to expect it, but the certainty of it was unknown to me till I learned it by your information. If gradual decline, the consequence of great age, be a sufficient preparation of the mind to encounter such a loss, our minds were certainly prepared to meet it: yet to you I need not say, that no preparation can supersede the feelings of the heart on such occasions. While our friends yet live inhabitants of the same world with ourselves, they seem still to live to *us;* we are sure that they sometimes think of us; and however impro-

bable it may seem, it is never impossible that we may see each other once again. But the grave, like a great gulph, swallows all such expectation, and in the moment when a beloved friend sinks into it, a thousand tender recollections awaken a regret, that will be felt in spite of all reasonings, and let our warnings have been what they may. Thus it is I take my last leave of poor Ashley, whose heart towards me was ever truly parental, and to whose memory I owe a tenderness and respect, that will never leave me.

W. C.

LETTER LIX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 10, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Your kind letter of precaution to Mr. Gregson sent him hither as soon as chapel-service was ended in the evening. But he found me already apprized of the event, that occasioned it, by a line from Sephus, received a few hours

before. My dear Uncle's death awakened in me many reflections, which for a time sunk my spirits. A man like him would have been mourned, had he doubled the age he reached. At any age his death would have been felt as a loss, that no survivor could repair. And though it was not probable, that for my own part I should ever see him more, yet the consciousness, that he still lived, was a comfort to me. Let it comfort us now, that we have lost him only at a time, when nature could afford him to us no longer; that as his life was blameless, so was his death without anguish; and that he is gone to Heaven. I know not, that human life, in its most prosperous state, can present any thing to our wishes half so desirable, as such a close of it.

Not to mingle this subject with others, that would ill suit with it, I will add no more at present, than a warm hope, that you and your Sister will be able effectually to avail yourselves of all the consolatory matter, with which it abounds. You gave yourselves, while he lived, to a Father, whose life was doubtless prolonged by your attentions, and whose tenderness of disposition made him always deeply sensible of your kindness in this respect, as well as in many others. His old age was the happiest, that I

have ever known, and I give you both joy of having had so fair an opportunity, and of having so well used it, to approve yourselves equal to the calls of such a duty in the sight of God and man.

W. C.

LETTER LX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 15, 1788.

Although I know, that you must be very much occupied on the present most affecting occasion, yet, not hearing from you, I began to be uneasy on your account, and to fear, that your health might have suffered by the fatigue both of body and spirits, that you must have undergone, till a letter, that reached me yesterday from the General, set my heart at rest, so far as that cause of anxiety was in question. He speaks of my Uncle in the tenderest terms, such as shew how truly sensible he was of the amiableness and excellence of his

character, and how deeply he regrets his loss. We have indeed lost one, who has not left his like in the present generation of our family, and whose equal, in all respects, no future of it will probably produce. My memory retains so perfect an impression of him, that, had I been painter instead of poet, I could from those faithful traces have perpetuated his face and form with the most minute exactness: and this I the rather wonder at, because some, with whom I was equally conversant five and twenty years ago, have almost faded out of all recollection with me. But he made impression not soon to be effaced, and was in figure, in temper, and manner, and in numerous other respects, such as I shall never behold again. I often think what a joyful interview there has been between him and some of his contemporaries, who went before him. The truth of the matter is, my dear, that they are the happy ones and that we shall never be such ourselves, till we have joined the party. Can there be any thing so worthy of our warmest wishes as to enter on an eternal, unchangeable state, in blessed fellowship and communion with those, whose society we valued most and for the best reasons, while they continued with us? A few steps more through a vain, foolish world, and this happiness will

be yours. But be not hasty, my dear, to accomplish thy journey! For of all, that live, thou art one, whom I can least spare; for thou also art one, who shalt not leave thy equal behind thee.

W. C.

LETTER LXI.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 17, 1788.

MY DEAR WALTER,

You think me, no doubt, a tardy correspondent, and such I am, but not willingly. Many hindrances have intervened, and the most difficult to surmount have been those, which the east and north-east winds have occasioned, breathing winter upon the roses of June, and inflaming my eyes, ten times more sensible of the inconvenience than they. The vegetables of England seem, like our animals, of a hardier and bolder nature than those of other countries. In France and Italy flowers blow, because it is warm, but here in spite of the cold. The season however is somewhat mended at present,

and my eyes with it. Finding myself this morning in perfect ease of body, I seize the welcome opportunity to do something at least towards the discharge of my arrears to you.

I am glad that you liked my song, and, if I liked the others myself so well as that I sent you, I would transcribe for you them also. But I sent *that*, because I accounted it the best. Slavery, and especially negro-slavery, because the cruelest, is an odious and disgusting subject. Twice or thrice I have been assailed with intreaties to write a poem on that theme. But beside that it would be in some sort treason against Homer to abandon him for any other matter, I felt myself so much hurt in my spirits the moment I entered on the contemplation of it, that I have at last determined absolutely to have nothing more to do with it. There are some scenes of horror, on which my imagination can dwell, not without some complacence. But then they are such scenes as God not man produces. In earthquakes, high winds, tempestuous seas, there is the grand as well as the terrible. But when man is active to disturb, there is such meanness in the design, and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of poetry to employ her in the des-

cription of it. I hope also, that the generality of my countrymen have more generosity in their nature than to want the fiddle of verse to go before them in the performance of an act to which they are invited by the loudest calls of humanity.

Breakfast calls, and then Homer.

Ever yours,

W. C.

Erratum.—Instead of Mr. Wilberforce as author of Manners of the Great, read Hannah More.

My paper mourns, and my seal. It is for the death of a venerable Uncle, Ashley Cowper, at the age of eighty-seven.

LETTER LXII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, June 23, 1788.

When I tell you, that an unanswered letter troubles my conscience in some

degree like a crime, you will think me endued with most heroic patience, who have so long submitted to that trouble on account of yours not answered yet. But the truth is, that I have been much engaged. Homer (you know) affords me constant employment; besides which I have rather what may be called, considering the privacy in which I have long lived, a numerous correspondence: to one of my friends in particular, a near and much loved relation, I write weekly, and sometimes twice in a week; nor are these my only excuses; the sudden changes of the weather much affected me, and especially with a disorder most unfavorable to letter-writing, an inflammation in my eyes. With all these apologies I approach you once more, not altogether despairing of forgiveness.

It has pleased God to give us rain, without which this part of our country at least must soon have become a desert. The meadows have been parched to a January brown, and we have foddered our cattle for some time, as in the winter. The goodness and power of God are never (I believe) so universally acknowledged as at the end of a long drought. Man is naturally a self-sufficient animal, and in all concerns, that seem to lie within the sphere of his

own ability, thinks little or not at all of the need he always has of protection and furtherance from above. But he is sensible, that the clouds will not assemble at his bidding, and that, though the clouds assemble, they will not fall in showers, because he commands them. When therefore at last the blessing descends, you shall hear even in the streets the most irreligious and thoughtless with one voice exclaim—"Thank God!"—confessing themselves indebted to his favor, and willing, at least so far as words go, to give him the glory. I can hardly doubt therefore, that the earth is sometimes parched, and the crops endangered, in order that the multitude may not want a memento, to whom they owe them, nor absolutely forget the power, on which all depend for all things.

Our solitary part of the year is over. Mrs. Unwin's Daughter and Son-in-law have lately spent some time with us. We shall shortly receive from London our old friends the Newtons, (he was once minister of Olney); and, when they leave us, we expect, that Lady Hesketh will succeed them, perhaps to spend the summer here, and possibly the winter also. The summer indeed is leaving us at a rapid rate, as do all the seasons, and though I have marked

their flight so often, I know not which is the swiftest. Man is never so deluded as when he dreams of his own duration. The answer of the old Patriarch to Pharaoh may be adopted by every man at the close of the longest life. "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." Whether we look back from fifty, or from twice fifty, the past appears equally a dream; and we can only be said truly to have lived, while we have been profitably employed. Alas, then! making the necessary deductions, how short is life! Were men in general to save themselves all the steps they take to no purpose, or to a bad one, what numbers, who are now active, would become sedentary!

Thus I have sermonized through my paper. Living where you live, you can bear with me the better. I always follow the leading of my unconstrained thoughts, when I write to a friend, be they grave or otherwise. Homer reminds me of you every day. I am now in the twenty-first Iliad.

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER LXIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 27, 1788.

For the sake of a longer visit, my dearest Coz. I can be well content to wait. The country, this country at least, is pleasant at all times, and when winter is come, or near at hand, we shall have the better chance for being snug. I know your passion for retirement indeed, or for what we call *deedy* retirement, and, the F——s intending to return to Bath with their mother, when her visit at the Hall is over, you will then find here exactly the retirement in question. I have made in the orchard the best winter-walk in all the parish, sheltered from the east, and from the north east, and open to the sun, except at his rising, all the day. Then we will have Homer and Don Quixote: and then we will have saunter and chat, and one laugh more before we die. Our orchard is alive with creatures of all kinds; poultry of every denomination swarms in it, and pigs, the drollest in the world!

I rejoice, that we have a Cousin Charles also, as

well as a Cousin Henry, who has had the address to win the good-likings of the Chancellor. May he fare the better for it! As to myself, I have long since ceased to have any expectations from that quarter. Yet, if he were indeed mortified as you say, (and no doubt you have particular reasons for thinking so) and repented to that degree of his hasty exertions in favor of the present occupant, who can tell? He wants neither means nor management, but can easily at some future period redress the evil, if he chuses to do it. But in the mean time life steals away, and shortly neither he will be in circumstances to do me a kindness, nor I to receive one at his hands. Let him make haste therefore, or he will die a promise in my debt, which he will never be able to perform. Your communications on this subject are as safe as you can wish them. We divulge nothing, but what might appear in the magazine, nor that without great consideration.

I must tell you a feat of my dog Beau. Walking by the river-side, I observed some water-lilies floating at a little distance from the bank. They are a large white flower, with an orange coloured eye, very beautiful. I had a desire to gather one, and, having your long cane in my hand, by the help of it endea-

voured to bring one of them within my reach. But the attempt proved vain, and I walked forward. Beau had all the while observed me very attentively. Returning soon after toward the same place, I observed him plunge into the river, while I was about forty yards distant from him; and, when I had nearly reached the spot, he swam to land with a lily in his mouth, which he came and laid at my foot.

Mr. Rose, whom I have mentioned to you, as a visiter of mine for the first time soon after you left us, writes me word, that he has seen my ballads against the slave-mongers, but not in print. Where he met with them, I know not. Mr. Bull begged hard for leave to print them at Newport-Pagnel, and I refused, thinking, that it would be wrong to anticipate the nobility, gentry, and others, at whose pressing instance I composed them, in their designs to print them. But perhaps I need not have been so squeamish: for the opportunity to publish them in London seems now not only ripe, but rotten. I am well content. There is but one of them, with which I am myself satisfied, though I have heard them all well spoken of. But there are very few things of my own composition, that I can endure to read, when they

have been written a month, though at first they seem to me to be all perfection.

Mrs. Unwin, who has been much the happier since the time of your return hither has been in some sort settled, begs me to make her kindest remembrance. Yours, my dear, most truly,

W. C.

LETTER LXIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, July 28, 1788.

It is in vain that you tell me you have no talent at description, while in fact you describe better than any body. You have given me a most complete idea of your mansion and its situation; and I doubt not, that with your letter in my hand by way of map, could I be set down on the spot in a moment, I should find myself qualified to take my walks and my pastime in whatever quarter of your paradise it should please me the most to visit. We also, as you know, have scenes at Weston worthy of description; but because you know them well, I will only say, that one of them has, within these few days, been much improved; I mean the lime walk.

By the help of the axe and the wood-bill, which have of late been constantly employed in cutting out all straggling branches that intercepted the arch; Mr. Throckmorton has now defined it with such exactness, that no cathedral in the world can show one of more magnificence or beauty. I bless myself that I live so near it; for were it distant several miles, it would be well worth while to visit it, merely as an object of taste; not to mention the refreshment of such a gloom both to the eyes and spirits. And these are the things which our modern improvers of parks and pleasure grounds have displaced without mercy; because, forsooth, they are rectilinear. It is a wonder they do not quarrel with the sun-beams for the same reason.

Have you seen the account of five hundred celebrated authors now living? I am one of them; but stand charged with the high crime and misdemeanor of totally neglecting method; an accusation which, if the gentleman would take the pains to read me, he would find sufficiently refuted. I am conscious at least myself of having laboured much in the arrangement of my matter, and of having given to the several parts of every book of the Task, as well as to each poem in the first volume, that sort of slight

connection which poetry demands; for in poetry (except professedly of the didactic kind) a logical precision would be stiff, pedantic, and ridiculous. But there is no pleasing some critics; the comfort is, that I am contented whether they be pleased or not. At the same time, to my honor be it spoken, the chronicler of us five hundred prodigies bestows on me, for aught I know, more commendations than on any other of my confraternity. May he live to write the histories of as many thousand poets, and find me the very best among them! Amen!

I join with you, my dearest Coz. in wishing that I owned the fee simple of all the beautiful scenes around you, but such emoluments were never designed for poets. Am I not happier than ever poet was in having thee for my Cousin, and in the expectation of thy arrival here whenever Strawberry-hill shall lose thee?

Ever thine,

W. C.

LETTER LXV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, August 9, 1785.

The Newtons are still here, and continue with us I believe until the 15th of the month. Here is also my friend, Mr. Rose, a valuable young man, who attracted by the effluvia of my genius, found me out in my retirement last January twelvemonth. I have not permitted him to be idle, but have made him transcribe for me the twelfth book of the Iliad. He brings me the compliments of several of the literati with whom he is acquainted in town, and tells me, that from Dr. Maclain, whom he saw lately, he learns that my book is in the hands of sixty different persons at the Hague, who are all enchanted with it; not forgetting the said Dr. Maclain himself, who tells him that he reads it every day, and is always the better for it. Oh rare we!

I have been employed this morning in composing a Latin motto for the king's clock. The embellishments of which are by Mr. Bacon. That gentleman breakfasted with us on Wednesday, having come

thirty-seven miles out of his way on purpose to see your Cousin. At his request I have done it, and have made two, he will chuse that which liketh him best. Mr. Bacon is a most excellent man, and a most agreeable companion: I would that he lived not so remote, or that he had more opportunity of travelling.

There is not, so far as I know, a syllable of the rhyming correspondence between me and my poor Brother left, save and except the six lines of it quoted in yours. I *had* the whole of it, but it perished in the wreck of a thousand other things when I left the Temple.

Breakfast calls. Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER LXVI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Aug. 18, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I left you with a sensible regret, alleviated only by the consideration, that I shall

see you again in October. I was under some concern also, lest, not being able to give you any certain directions myself, nor knowing where you might find a guide, you should wander and fatigue yourself, good walker as you are, before you could reach Northampton. Perhaps you heard me whistle just after our separation; it was to call back Beau, who was running after you with all speed to intreat you to return with me. For my part, I took my own time to return, and did not reach home till after one; and then so weary that I was glad of my great chair; to the comforts of which I added a crust, and a glass of rum and water, not without great occasion. Such a foot-traveller am I.

I am writing on Monday, but whether I shall finish my letter this morning depends on Mrs. Unwin's coming sooner or later down to breakfast. Something tells me that you set off to day for Birmingham; and though it be a sort of Iricism to say here, I beseech you take care of yourself, for the day threatens great heat, I cannot help it; the weather may be cold enough at the time when that good advice shall reach you, but be it hot or be it cold to a man who travels as you travel, take care of yourself,

can never be an unseasonable caution. I am sometimes distressed on this account, for though you are young, and well made for such exploits, those very circumstances are more likely than any thing to betray you into danger.

Consule quid valeant PLANTÆ, quid ferre recusent.

The Newtons left us on Friday. We frequently talked about you after your departure, and every thing that was spoken was to your advantage. I know they will be glad to see you in London, and perhaps when your summer and autumn rambles are over, you will afford them that pleasure. The Throckmortons are equally well disposed to you, and them also I recommend to you as a valuable connection, the rather because you can only cultivate it at Weston.

I have not been idle since you went, having not only laboured as usual at the Iliad, but composed a *spick* and *span* new piece, called "The Dog and the Water Lily," which you shall see when we meet again. I believe I related to you the incident which is the subject of it. I have also read most of Lavater's Aphorisms; they appear to me some of them wise, many of them whimsical, a few of them false, and not

a few of them extravagant. *Nil illi medium.* If he finds in a man the feature or quality that he approves, he deifies him; if the contrary, he is a devil. His verdict is in neither case, I suppose, a just one.

W. C.

LETTER LXVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Sept. 11, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Since your departure I have twice visited the oak, and with an intention to push my inquiries a mile beyond it, where it seems I should have found another oak, much larger, and much more respectable than the former; but once I was hindered by the rain and once by the sultriness of the day. This latter oak has been known by the name of Judith many ages, and is said to have been an oak at the time of the Conquest. If I have not an opportunity to reach it before your arrival here, we will attempt that exploit together, and even if I should have been able to visit it ere you come, I shall yet be glad to do so, for the pleasure of extraordinary sights, like all other pleasures, is doubled by the participation of a friend.

You wish for a copy of my little dog's eulogium, which I will therfore transcribe, but by so doing I shall leave myself but scanty room for prose.

I shall be sorry if our neighbours at the Hall should have left it, when we have the pleasure of seeing you. I want you to see them soon again, that a little *consuetudo* may wear off restaint; and you may be able to improve the advantage you have already gained in that quarter. I pitied you for the fears which deprived you of your Uncle's company, and the more having suffered so much by those fears myself. Fight against that vicious fear, for such it is, as strenuously as you can. It is the worst enemy that can attack a man destined to the forum—it ruined me. To associate as much as possible with the most respectable company, for good sense, and good breeding, is, I believe, the only, at least I am sure it is the best remedy. The society of men of pleasure will not cure it, but rather leaves us more exposed to its influence in company of better persons.

Now for the Dog and the Water Lily.*

W. C.

* *NOTE BY THE EDITOR.*

As the poem inserted in this letter, has been printed repeatedly, I shall here

ON

A SPANIEL,

CALLED BEAU,

KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

A spaniel, Beau, that fares like you,
Well-fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle, that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat,
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chas'd with furious heat,
You left, where he was slain.

introduce in its stead two sprightly little poems, on the same favorite spaniel, written indeed at a later period, but hitherto, I believe unpublished.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble man!

BEAU'S REPLY.

Sir! when I flew to seize the bird,
In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
And harder to withstand:

You cried "forbear!" but in my breast
A mightier cried, "proceed!"
'Twas nature, Sir, whose strong behest
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect,
I ventur'd once to break
(As you perhaps may recollect)
Her precept, for your sake:

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
And panting press'd the floor

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destin'd to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
And lick'd his feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
My disobedience now;
Nor some reproof yourself refuse
From your aggriev'd Bow-wow!

If killing birds be such a crime,
(Which I can hardly see,)
What think you, Sir, of killing time,
With verse address'd to me?

LETTER LXVIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Sept. 25, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Say what is the thing by my Riddle design'd,
Which you carried to London, and yet left behind.

I expect your answer, and without a fee.—The half hour next before breakfast I devote to you. The moment Mrs. Unwin arrives in the study, be what I have written much or little, I shall make my bow, and take leave. If you live to be a judge, as if I augur right you will, I shall expect to hear of a walking circuit.

I was shocked at what you tell me of——: Superior talents, it seems, give no security for propriety of conduct; on the contrary, having a natural tendency to nourish pride, they often betray the possessor into such mistakes, as men more moderately gifted never commit. Ability therefore is not wisdom, and an ounce of grace is a better guard against gross absurdity, than the brightest talents in the world.

I rejoice that you are prepared for transcript

work, here will be plenty for you. The day on which you shall receive this, I beg you will remember to drink one glass at least to the success of the Iliad, which I finished the day before yesterday, and yesterday began the Odyssey. It will be some time before I shall perceive myself travelling in another road; the objects around me are at present so much the same; Olympus, and a council of Gods meet me at my first entrance. To tell you the truth, I am weary of heroes and deities, and, with reverence be it spoken, shall be glad for variety's sake, to exchange their company for that of a Cyclops.

Weston has not been without its tragedies since you left us; Mrs. Throckmorton's piping bullfinch has been eaten by a rat, and the villain left nothing but poor Bully's beak behind him. It will be a wonder if this event does not at some convenient time employ my versifying passion. Did ever fair lady, from the Lesbia of Catullus, to the present day, lose her bird, and find no poet to commemorate the loss?

W. C.

LETTER LXIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq

Weston, Nov. 30, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter, accompanying the books with which you have favored me, and for which I return you a thousand thanks, did not arrive till yesterday. I shall have great pleasure in taking now and then a peep at my old friend Vincent Bourne; the neatest of all men in his versification, though when I was under his ushership, at Westminster, the most slovenly in his person. He was so inattentive to his boys, and so indifferent whether they brought him good or bad exercises, or none at all, that he seemed determined, as he was the best, so to be the last Latin poet of the Westminster line; a plot which, I believe, he executed very successfully, for I have not heard of any, who has deserved to be compared with him.

We have had hardly any rain or snow since you left us; the roads are accordingly as dry as in the middle of summer, and the opportunity of walking much more favorable. We have no season in my mind,

so pleasant as such a winter; and I account it particularly fortunate, that such it proves, my Cousin being with us. She is in good health, and cheerful, so are we all; and this I say, knowing you will be glad to hear it, for you have seen the time, when this could not be said of all your friends at Weston. We shall rejoice to see you here at Christmas; but I recollect when I hinted such an excursion by word of mouth, you gave me no great encouragement to expect you. Minds alter, and yours may be of the number of those that do so; and if it should, you will be entirely welcome to us all. Were there no other reason for your coming than merely the pleasure it will afford to us, that reason alone would be sufficient; but after so many toils, and with so many more in prospect, it seems essential to your well-being that you should allow yourself a respite, which perhaps you can take as comfortably (I am sure as quietly) here as any where.

The ladies beg to be remembered to you with all possible esteem and regard; they are just come down to breakfast, and being at this moment extremely talkative, oblige me to put an end to my letter. Adieu.

W. C.

I have a fresh occasion to acknowledge my obligation to Lord Carrington for another additional letter of Cowper.——The following contains the genuine sentiments of the poet on the political character of Mr. Pitt. I print them with a melancholy pleasure in reflecting that these two illustrious and eloquent men, who are equally enshrined in the grateful remembrance of our country, spoke with justice and sensibility on the talents and virtues of each other.

LETTER LXX.

To ROBERT SMITH, Esq.

Weston Underwood, Dec. 20, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mrs. Unwin is in tolerable health, and adds her warmest thanks to mine for your favor, and for your obliging enquiries. My own health is better than it has been many years. Long time I had a stomach that would digest

nothing, and now nothing disagrees with it, an amendment for which I am, under God, indebted to the daily use of soluble tartar, which I have never omitted these two years. I am still, as you may suppose, occupied in my long labour. The Iliad has nearly received its last polish. And I have advanced in a rough copy, as far as to the ninth book of the Odyssey. My friends are, some of them, in haste to see the work printed, and my answer to them is—"I do nothing else, and this I do day and night—it must in time be finished."

My thoughts however are not engaged to Homer only. I cannot be so much a poet as not to feel greatly for the King, the Queen, and the country. My speculations on these subjects are indeed melancholy, for no such tragedy has befallen in my day. We are forbidden to trust in man; I will not therefore say, I trust in Mr. Pitt;—but in his counsels, under the blessing of providence, the remedy is, I believe, to be found, if a remedy there be. His integrity, firmness, and sagacity, are the only human means that seem adequate to the great emergence.

You say nothing of your own health, of which I should have been happy to have heard favorably.

May you long enjoy the best. Neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself have a sincerer, or a warmer wish than for your felicity.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Your most obliged and affectionate.

W. C.

LETTER LXXI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Jan. 19, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I have taken since you went away many of the walks which we have taken together, and none of them I believe, without thoughts of you. I have, though not a good memory in general, yet a good local memory, and can recollect, by the help of a tree or stile what you said on that particular spot. For this reason I purpose, when the summer is come, to walk with a book in my pocket: what I read at my fire-side I forget, but what I read under a hedge, or at the side of a pond, that pond and that hedge will always bring to my remembrance; and this is a sort of memoria technica, which I would recommend to you, if I did not know that you have no occasion for it.

I am reading Sir John Hawkins, and still hold the same opinion of his book as when you were here. There are in it undoubtedly some awkwardnesses of phrase, and which is worse, here and there, some unequivocal indications of a vanity not easily pardonable

in a man of his years; but on the whole I find it amusing, and to me at least, to whom every thing that has passed in the literary world within these five and twenty years is new, sufficiently replete with information. Mr. Throckmorton told me about three days since, that it was lately recommended to him by a sensible man, as a book that would give him great insight into the history of modern literature, and modern men of letters, a commendation which I really think it merits. Fifty years hence perhaps, the world will feel itself obliged to him.

W. C.

LETTER LXXII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Jan, 24, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

We have heard from my Cousin in Norfolk-street; she reached home safely, and in good time. An observation suggests itself, which, though I have but little time for observation making, I must allow myself time to mention. Acci-

dents, as we call them, generally occur when there seems least reason to expect them; if a friend of ours travels far in different roads, and at an unfavorable season, we are reasonably alarmed for the safety of one, in whom we take so much interest; yet how seldom do we hear a tragical account of such a journey! It is on the contrary, at home, in our yard, or garden, perhaps in our parlour, that disaster finds us; in any place, in short, where we seem perfectly out of the reach of danger. The lesson inculcated by such a procedure on the part of Providence towards us, seems to be that of perpetual dependence.

Having preached this sermon, I must hasten to a close; you know that I am not idle, nor can I afford to be so; I would glady spend more time with you, but by some means or other this day has hitherto proved a day of hindrance and confusion.

W. C.

LETTER LXXIII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 29, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I shall be a better, at least a more frequent correspondent when I have done with Homer. I am not forgetful of any letters that I owe, and least of all forgetful of my debts in that way to you; on the contrary, I live in a continual state of self-reproach for not writing more punctually, but the old Grecian, whom I charge myself never to neglect, lest I should never finish him, has at present a voice, that seems to drown all other demands, and many, to which I could listen with more pleasure, than even to his *Os rotundum*. I am now in the eleventh book of the Odyssey, conversing with the dead. Invoke the muse in my behalf, that I may roll the stone of Sisyphus with some success. To do it as Homer has done it, is I suppose, in our verse and language, impossible, but I will hope not to labour altogether to as little purpose as Sisyphus himself did.

Though I meddle little with politics, and can

find but little leisure to do so, the present state of things unavoidably engages a share of my attention. But as they say, Archimedes, when Syracuse was taken, was found busied in the solution of a problem, so, come what may, I shall be found translating Homer.

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXIV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, May 20, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Finding myself between twelve and one, at the end of the seventeenth book of the Odyssey, I give the interval between the present moment and the time of walking, to you. If I write letters before I sit down to Homer, I feel my spirits too flat for poetry, and too flat for letter-writing if I address myself to Homer first; but the last I chuse as the least evil, because my friends will pardon my dullness, but the public will not.

I had been some days uneasy on your account when yours arrived. We should have rejoiced to have seen you, would your engagements have permitted: but in the autumn I hope, if not before, we shall have the pleasure to receive you. At what time we may expect Lady Hesketh, at present, I know not; but imagine that at any time after the month of June you will be sure to find her with us, which I mention, knowing that to meet you will add a relish to all the pleasures she can find at Weston.

When I wrote those lines on the Queen's visit, I thought I had performed well; but it belongs to me as I have told you before, to dislike whatever I write when it has been written a month. The performance was therefore sinking in my esteem, when your approbation of it arriving in good time, buoyed it up again. It will now keep possession of the place it holds in my good opinion, because it has been favored with yours; and a copy will certainly be at your service whenever you chuse to have one.

Nothing is more certain than that when I wrote the line,

God made the country, and man made the town,

I had not the least recollection of that very si-

milar one, which you quote from Hawkins Brown. It convinces me that critics (and none more than Warton, in his notes on Milton's minor poems) have often charged authors with borrowing what they drew from their own fund. Brown was an entertaining companion when he had drank his bottle, but not before, this proved a snare to him, and he would sometimes drink too much; but I know not that he was chargeable with any other irregularities. He had those among his intimates, who would not have been such, had he been otherwise viciously inclined; the Duncombes, in particular, father and son, who were of unblemished morals.

W. C.

ON

THE QUEEN'S VISIT

TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE SEVENTEENTH OF MARCH,

1789.

When long sequester'd from his throne
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign!

Then Loyalty, with all her lamps
New trimm'd, a gallant show!
Chasing the darkness, and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets, of squares,
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of Heaven.

So fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves on high,
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er designed.

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where George recover'd made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was lov'd by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design——
Darkness O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolv'd to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night, except her own.

Arriv'd, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sov'reign come.

Pleas'd she beheld aloft pourtray'd
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health, and heav'nly aid,
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the ænigmatic line,
So difficult to spell!
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,
The night his city fell.

Soon watery grew her eyes, and dim,
But with a joyful tear!
None else, except in pray'er for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like that in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created, and sustain'd.

But other magic there she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone!

That cordial thought her spirit cheer'd,
And through the cumb'rous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene,
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice!
Heav'n grant us no such future sight,
Such precious woe the price!

LETTER LXXV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, June 5, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am going to give you a deal of trouble, but London folks must be content to be troubled by country folks; for in London only can our strange necessities be supplied. You must buy for me, if you please, a cuckow clock; and now I will tell you where they are sold, which, Londoner as you are, it is possible you may not know. They are sold, I am informed, at more houses than one, in that narrow part of Holborn which leads into broad St. Giles.' It seems they are well-going clocks, and cheap, which are the two best recommendations of any clock. They are made in Germany, and such numbers of them are annually imported, that they are become even a considerable article of commerce.

I return you many thanks for Boswell's tour. I read it to Mrs. Unwin after supper, and we find it amusing. There is much trash in it, as there must always be in every narrative that relates indiscriminately all that passed. But now and then the Doctor speaks like an oracle, and that makes amends for all. Sir John was a coxcomb, and Boswell is not less a coxcomb, though of another kind. I fancy Johnson made coxcombs of all his friends, and they in return made him a coxcomb; for with reverence be it spoken, such he certainly was, and flattered as he was sure to be so.

Thanks for your invitation to London, but unless London can come to me, I fear we shall never meet. I was sure that you would love my friend when you should once be well acquainted with him; and equally sure that he would take kindly to you.

Now for Homer.

W. C.

LETTER LXXVI.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 16, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You will naturally suppose that the letter in which you announced your marriage occasioned me some concern, though in my answer I had the wisdom to conceal it. The account you gave me of the object of your choice was such as left me at liberty to form conjectures not very comfortable to myself, if my friendship for you were indeed sincere. I have since, however, been sufficiently consoled. Your Brother Chester has informed me that you have married not only one of the most agreeable, but one of the most accomplished women in the kingdom. It is an old maxim, that it is better to exceed expectation than to disappoint it, and with this maxim in your view it was, no doubt, that you dwelt only on circumstances of disadvantage, and would not treat me with a recital of others which abundantly overweigh them. I now congratulate not you only, but myself, and truly rejoice that my friend has chosen for his fellow-traveller, through the re-

maining stages of his journey, a companion who will do honor to his discernment, and make his way, so far as it can depend on a wife to do so, pleasant to the last.

My verses on the Queen's visit to London either have been printed, or soon will be, in the World. The finishing to which you objected I have altered, and have substituted two new stanzas instead of it. Two others also I have struck out, another critic having objected to *them*. I think I am a very tractable sort of poet. Most of my fraternity would as soon shorten the noses of their children because they were said to be too long, as thus dock their compositions in compliance with the opinion of others. I beg that when my life shall be written hereafter, my authorship's ductability of temper may not be forgotten!

I am, my dear friend!

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, June 20, 1789.

AMICO MIO,

I am truly sorry that it must be so long before we can have an opportunity to meet. My Cousin in her last letter but one, inspired me with other expectations, expressing a purpose if the matter could be so contrived, of bringing you with her; I was willing to believe that you had consulted together on the subject, and found it feasible. A month was formerly a trifle in my account, but at my present age I give it all its importance, and grudge that so many months should yet pass, in which I have not even a glimpse of those I love, and of whom, the course of nature considered, I must ere long take leave for ever—but I shall live till August.

Many thanks for the cuckow, which arrived perfectly safe, and goes well, to the amusement and amazement of all who hear it. Hannah lies awake to hear it, and I am not sure that we have not others in the house that admire his music as much as she.

Having read both Hawkins and Boswell, I now

think myself almost as much a master of Johnson's character as if I had known him personally, and cannot but regret, *that our bards of other times* found no such biographer as these. They have both been ridiculed, and the wits have had their laugh; but such an history of Milton or Shakespear, as they have given of Johnson——Oh how desirable!

LETTER LXXVIII.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON.

July 18, 1789.

Many thanks, my dear Madam, for your extract from George's letter. I retain but little Italian, yet that little was so forcibly mustered by the consciousness that I was myself the subject, that I presently became master of it. I have always said that George is a poet, and I am never in his company but I discover proofs of it, and the delicate address by which he has managed his complimentary mention of me, convinces me of it still more than

ever. Here are a thousand poets of us, who have impudence enough to write for the public; but amongst the modest men who are by diffidence restrained from such an enterprize are those who would eclipse us all. I wish that George would make the experiment, I would bind on his laurels with my own hand.

Your gardener has gone after his wife, but having neglected to take his lyre, *alias* fiddle with him, has not yet brought home his Eurydice. Your clock in the hall has stopped, and (strange to tell!) it stopped at the sight of the watch-maker. For he only looked at it, and it has been motionless ever since. Mr. Gregson is gone, and the Hall is a desolation. Pray don't think any place pleasant that you may find in your rambles, that we may see you the sooner. Your aviary is all in good health. I pass it every day, and often enquire at the lattice; the inhabitants of it send their duty, and wish for your return. I took notice of the inscription on your seal, and had we an artist here capable of furnishing me with another, you should read on mine. "*Encore une lettre.*"

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER LXXIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, July 23, 1789.

You do well, my dear Sir, to improve your opportunity; to speak in the rural phrase, this is your sowing time, and the sheaves you look for can never be yours unless you make that use of it. The colour of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years, in which we are our own masters, make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our own destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments. Had I employed my time as wisely as you, in a situation very similar to yours, I had never been a poet perhaps, but I might by this time have acquired a character of more importance in society; and a situation in which my friends would have been better pleased to see me. But three years mis-spent in an attorney's office, were almost of course followed by several more equally mis-spent in the Temple, and the consequence has been, as the Italian epitaph says, "*Sto qui.*"—The only use I can make of my-

self now, at least the best, is to serve *in terrorem* to others, when occasion may happen to offer, that they may escape (so far as my admonitions can have any weight with them) my folly and my fate. When you feel yourself tempted to relax a little of the strictness of your present discipline, and to indulge in amusement incompatible with your future interests, think on your friend at Weston.

Having said this, I shall next, with my whole heart invite you hither, and assure you that I look forward to approaching August with great pleasure; because it promises me your company. After a little time (which we shall wish longer) spent with us, you will return invigorated to your studies, and pursue them with the more advantage. In the mean time you have lost little, in point of season, by being confined to London. Incessant rains, and meadows under water, have given to the summer the air of winter, and the country has been deprived of half its beauties.

It is time to tell you that we are all well, and often make you our subject. This is the third meeting that my Cousin and we have had in this country; and a great instance of good fortune I account it in such a world as this, to have expected

such a pleasure thrice without being once disappointed. Add to this wonder as soon as you can by making yourself of the party.

W. C.

LETTER LXXX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, August 8, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Come when you will, or when you can, you cannot come at a wrong time, but we shall expect you on the day mentioned.

If you have any book that you think will make pleasant evening reading, bring it with you. I now read Mrs. Piozzi's Travels to the ladies after supper, and shall probably have finished them before we shall have the pleasure of seeing you. It is the fashion, I understand, to condemn them. But we, who make books ourselves, are more merciful to book-makers. I would that every fastidious judge of authors, were himself obliged to write; there goes more to the

composition of a volume than many critics imagine. I have often wondered that the same poet who wrote the Dunciad, should have written these lines,

The mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Alas! for Pope, if the mercy he showed to others, was the measure of the mercy he received! he was the less pardonable too, because experienced in all the difficulties of composition.

I scratch this between dinner, and tea; a time when I cannot write much without disordering my noddle, and bringing a flush into my face. You will excuse me therefore, if through respect for the two important considerations of health and beauty, I conclude myself,

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Sept. 24, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You left us exactly at the wrong time. Had you staid till now, you would have had the pleasure of hearing even my Cousin say—"I am cold."—And the still greater pleasure of being warm yourself; for I have had a fire in the study ever since you went. It is the fault of our summers that they are hardly ever warm or cold enough. Were they warmer we should not want a fire, and were they colder we should have one.

I have twice seen and conversed with Mr. J—. he is witty, intelligent, and agreeable beyond the common measure of men who are so. But it is the constant effect of a spirit of party to make those hateful to each other, who are truly amiable in themselves.

Beau sends his love; he was melancholy the whole day after your departure.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, Oct. 4, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The hamper is come, and come safe; and the contents I can affirm on my own knowledge, are excellent. It chanced that another hamper and a box came by the same conveyance, all which I unpacked and expounded in the hall; my Cousin sitting, mean time, on the stairs, spectatress of the business. We diverted ourselves with imagining the manner, in which Homer would have described the scene. Detailed in his circumstantial way, it would have furnished materials for a paragraph of considerable length in an Odyssey.

> The straw-stuff'd hamper with his ruthless steel
> He open'd, cutting sheer th' inserted cords,
> Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
> The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat,
> Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green
> Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd

Drop after drop odorous, by the art
Of the fair mother of his friend——the Rose.

And so on.

I should rejoice to be the hero of such a tale in the hands of Homer.

You will remember, I trust, that when the state of your health or spirits calls for rural walks and fresh air, you have always a retreat at Weston.

We are all well, all love you, down to the very dog; and shall be glad to hear that you have exchanged langour for alacrity, and the debility that you mention, for indefatigable vigour.

Mr. Throckmorton has made me a handsome present; Villoison's edition of the Iliad, elegantly bound by Edwards. If I live long enough, by the contributions of my friends, I shall once more be possessed of a library.

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXIII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston, Dec. 18, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The present appears to me a wonderful period in the history of mankind. That nations so long contentedly slaves, should on a sudden become enamoured of liberty, and understand, as suddenly, their own natural right to it, feeling themselves at the same time inspired with resolution to assert it, seems difficult to account for from natural causes. With respect to the final issue of all this, I can only say, that if having discovered the value of liberty, they should next discover the value of peace, and lastly the value of the word of God, they will be happier than they ever were since the rebellion of the first pair, and as happy as it is possible they should be in the present life.

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXIV.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR WALTER,

I know that you are too reasonable a man to expect any thing like punctuality of correspondence from a translator of Homer, especially from one who is a doer also of many other things at the same time; for I labour hard not only to acquire a little fame for myself, but to win it also for others, men of whom I know nothing, not even their names, who send me their poetry, that by translating it out of prose into verse, I may make it more like poetry than it was. Having heard all this, you will feel yourself not only inclined to pardon my long silence, but to pity me also for the cause of it. You may if you please believe likewise, for it is true, that I have a faculty of remembering my friends even when I do not write to them, and of loving them not one jot the less, though I leave them to starve for want of a letter from me. And now I think you have an apology both as to style, matter and manner, altogether unexceptionable.

Why is the winter like a backbiter? Because Solomon says that a backbiter separates between chief friends, and so does the winter; to this dirty season it is owing that I see nothing of the valuable Chesters, whom indeed I see less at all times than serves at all to content me. I hear of them indeed occasionally from my neighbours at the Hall, but even of that comfort I have lately enjoyed less than usual, Mr. Throckmorton having been hindered by his first fit of the gout from his usual visits to Chichely. The gout however has not prevented his making me a handsome present of a folio edition of the Iliad, published about a year since at Venice, by a literato, who calls himself Villoison. It is possible that you have seen it, and that if you have it not yourself, it has at least found its way to Lord Bagot's library. If neither should be the case, when I write next (for sooner or later I shall certainly write to you again if I live) I will send you some pretty stories out of his Prolegomena, which will make your hair stand on end as mine has stood on end already, they so horribly affect, in point of authenticity, the credit of the works of the immortal Homer.

Wishing you and Mrs. Bagot all the happiness that a new year can possibly bring with it, I remain,

with Mrs. Unwin's best respects, yours, my dear friend, with all sincerity,

W. C.

My paper mourns for the death of Lord Cowper, my valuable Cousin, and much my benefactor.

LETTER LXXXV.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am a terrible creature for not writing sooner, but the old excuse must serve, at least I will not occupy paper with the addition of others unless you should insist on it, in which case I can assure you that I have them ready. Now to business.

From Villoison I learn that it was the avowed opinion and persuasion of Callimachus (whose hymns we both studied at Westminster) that Homer was very imperfectly understood even in his day; that his admirers, deceived by the perspicuity of his style, fan-

cied themselves masters of his meaning, when in truth, they knew little about it.

Now we know that Callimachus, as I have hinted, was himself a poet, and a good one; he was also esteemed a good critic, he almost, if not actually, adored Homer, and imitated him as nearly as he could.

What shall we say to this? I will tell you what I say to it. Callimachus meant, and he could mean nothing more by this assertion, than that the poems of Homer were in fact an allegory, that under the obvious import of his stories, lay concealed a mystic sense, sometimes philosophical, sometimes religious, sometimes moral, and that the generality either wanted penetration or industry, or had not been properly qualified by their studies, to discover it. This I can readily believe, for I am myself an ignoramus in these points, and except here and there, discern nothing more than the letter. But if Callimachus will tell me that even of *that* I am ignorant, I hope soon by two great volumes to convince him of the contrary.

I learn also from the same Villoison, that Pisistratus, who was a sort of Mecænas in Athens, where he gave great encouragement to literature,

and built and furnished a public library, regretting that there was no complete copy of Homer's works in the world, resolved to make one. For this purpose he advertised rewards in all the newspapers to those, who being possessed memoriter of any part or parcels of the poems of that bard, would resort to his house, and repeat them to his secretaries that they might write them. Now it happened that more were desirous of the reward than qualified to deserve it. The consequence was that the non-qualified persons having, many of them, a pretty knack at versification, imposed on the generous Athenian most egregiously, giving him instead of Homer's verses, which they had not to give, verses of their own invention. He, good creature, suspecting no such fraud, took them all for gospel, and entered them into his volume accordingly.

Now let *him* believe the story who can. That Homer's works were in this manner corrected I *can* believe, but that a learned Athenian could be so imposed upon, with sufficient means of detection at hand, I *cannot*. Would he not be on his guard? Would not a difference of style and manner have occurred? Would not that difference have excited a suspicion? Would not that suspicion have led to enquiry, and

would not that enquiry have issued in detection? For how easy was it in the multitude of Homer-conners to find two, ten, twenty, possessed of the questionable passage, and by confronting him with the impudent impostor, to convict him. *Abeas ergo in malam rem cum istis tuis hallucinationibus, Villoisone!*

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXVI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Jan. 3, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been long silent, but you have had the charity I hope, and believe, not to ascribe my silence to a wrong cause. The truth is, I have been too busy to write to any body, having been obliged to give my early mornings to the revisal and correction of a little volume of Hymns for Children written by I know not whom. This task I finished but yesterday, and while it was in hand, wrote only to my Cousin, and to her rarely. From her, however,

I knew that you would hear of my well being, which made me less anxious about my debts to you than I could have been otherwise.

I am almost the only person at Weston, known to you, who have enjoyed tolerable health this winter. In your next letter give us some account of your own state of health, for I have had many anxieties about you. The winter has been mild; but our winters are in general such, that when a friend leaves us in the beginning of that season, I always feel in my heart a *perhaps*, importing that we have possibly met for the last time, and that the robins may whistle on the grave of one of us before the return of summer.

I am still thrumming Homer's lyre; that is to say I am still employed in my last revisal; and to give you some idea of the intenseness of my toils, I will inform you that it cost me all the morning yesterday, and all the evening, to translate a single simile to my mind. The transitions from one member of the subject to another, though easy and natural in the Greek, turn out often so intolerably awkward in an English version, that almost endless labour, and no little address, are requisite to give them grace and elegance. I forget if I told you that your German Clavis has been of considerable use to me. I am indebted to

it for a right understanding of the manner in which Achilles prepared pork, mutton, and goat's flesh, for the entertainment of his friends, in the night when they came deputed by Agamemnon to negociate a reconciliation. A passage of which nobody in the world is perfectly master, myself only, and Schaulfelbergerus excepted, nor ever was, except when Greek was a *live* language.

I do not know whether my Cousin has told you or not how I brag in my letters to her concerning my Translation; perhaps her modesty feels more for me than mine for myself, and she would blush to let even you know the degree of my self-conceiton that subject. I will tell you however, expressing myself as decently as vanity will permit, that it has undergone such a change for the better in this last revisal that I have much warmer hopes of success than formerly.

Yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 23, 1790.

MY DEAR COZ.

I had a letter yesterday from the wild boy Johnson, for whom I have conceived a great affection. It was just such a letter as I like, of the true helter-skelter kind; and though he writes a remarkably good hand, scribbled with such rapidity that it was barely legible. He gave me a droll account of the adventures of Lord Howard's note, and of his own in pursuit of it. The poem, he brought me, came as from Lord Howard, with his Lordship's request that I would revise it. It is in the form of a pastoral, and is entitled "*The Tale of the Lute*, or, *the Beauties of Audley End*." I read it attentively; was much pleased with part of it, and part of it I equally disliked. I told him so, and in such terms as one naturally uses when there seems to be no occasion to qualify, or to alleviate censure. I observed him afterwards somewhat more thoughtful and silent, but occasionally as pleasant as usual; and in Kilwick-wood, where we walked the next day, the truth came

out; that he was himself the author, and that Lord Howard not approving it altogether, and several friends of his own age, to whom he had shewn it, differing from his Lordship in opinion, and being highly pleased with it, he had come at last to a resolution to abide by my judgment; a measure to which Lord Howard by all means advised him. He accordingly brought it, and will bring it again in the summer, when we shall lay our heads together and try to mend it.

I have lately had a letter also from Mrs. King, to whom I had written to enquire whether she were living or dead, she tells me the critics expect from my Homer every thing in some parts, and that in others I shall fall short. These are the Cambridge critics; and she has her intelligence from the botanical professor, Martyn. That gentleman in reply, answers them, that I shall fall short in nothing, but shall disappoint them all. It shall be my endeavour to do so, and I am not without hope of succeeding.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Feb. 2, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Should Heyne's Homer appear before mine, which I hope is not probable, and should he adopt in it the opinion of Bentley, that the whole last Odyssey is spurious, I will dare to contradict both him and the Doctor. I am only in part of Bentley's mind (if indeed his mind were such) in this matter, and giant as he was in learning, and eagle-eyed in criticism, am persuaded, convinced, and sure (can I be more positive?) that except from the moment when the Ithacans begin to meditate an attack on the cottage of Laertes, and thence to the end, that book is the work of Homer. From the moment aforesaid, I yield the point, or rather have never, since I had any skill in Homer, felt myself at all inclined to dispute it. But I believe perfectly at the same time that, Homer himself alone excepted, the Greek poet never existed, who could have written the speeches made by the shade of Agamemnon, in which there is more insight into the human heart discovered, than

I ever saw in any other work, unless in Shakespeare's. I am equally disposed to fight for the whole passage that describes Laertes, and the interview between him and Ulysses. Let Bentley grant these to Homer, and I will shake hands with him as to all the rest. The battle with which the book concludes is, I think a paltry battle, and there is a huddle in the management of it altogether unworthy of my favorite, and the favorite of all ages.

If you should happen to fall into company with Dr. Warton again, you will not, I dare say, forget to make him my respectful compliments and to assure him that I felt myself not a little flattered by the favorable mention he was pleased to make of me, and my labours. The poet who pleases a man like him has nothing left to wish for. I am glad that you were pleased with my young Cousin Johnson; he is a boy, and bashful, but has great merit in respect both of character and intellect, So far at least as in a week's knowledge of him I could possibly learn; he is very amiable, and very sensible, and inspired me with a warm wish to know him better.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXIX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 9, 1790.

I have sent you lately scraps instead of letters, having had occasion to answer immediately on the receipt, which always happens while I am *deep in Homer*.

I knew when I recommended Johnson to you, that you would find some way to serve him, and so it has happened, for notwithstanding your own apprehensions to the contrary, you have already procured him a chaplainship: This is pretty well, considering that it is an early day, and that you have but just begun to know that there is such a man under Heaven. I had rather myself be patronized by a person of small interest, with a heart like yours, than by the Chancellor himself, if he did not care a farthing for me.

If I did not desire you to make my acknowledgments to Anonymous, as I believe I did not, it was because I am not aware that I am warranted to do so. But the omission is of less consequence, because

whoever he is, though he has no objection to doing the kindest things, he seems to have an aversion to the thanks they merit.

You must know that two odes composed by Horace, have lately been discovered at Rome; I wanted them transcribed into the blank leaves of a little Horace of mine, and Mrs. Throckmorton performed that service for me; in a blank leaf therefore of the same book I wrote the following.

W. C.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON,

ON

HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE's ODE,

AD LIBRUM SUUM.

Maria, could Horace have guess'd
What honors awaited his ode,
To his own little volume address'd,
The honor which you have bestow'd;
Who have trac'd it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat;
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer,
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,
Hereafter a nymph shall arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
The glory your malice denies;
Shall dignity give to my lay,
Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
Nothing ever was written so well.

LETTER XC.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 26, 1790.

You have set my heart at ease, my Cousin, so far as you were yourself the object of its anxieties. What other troubles it feels can be cured by God alone. But you are never silent a week longer than usual, without giving an opportunity to my imagination (ever fruitful in flowers of a sable hue) to tease me with them day and night. London is indeed a pestilent place, as you call it, and I would, with all my heart, that thou hadst less to do with it; were you under the same roof with

me, I should know you to be safe, and should never distress you with melancholy letters.

I feel myself well enough inclined to the measure you propose, and will shew to your new acquaintance with all my heart, a sample of my Translation, but it shall not if you please be taken from the Odyssey. It is a poem of a gentler character than the Iliad, and as I propose to carry her by a *coup de main*, I shall employ Achilles, Agamemnon, and the two armies of Greece and Troy in my service. I will accordingly send you in the box that I received from you last night, the two first books of the Iliad, for that lady's perusal; to those I have given a third revisal; for them therefore I will be answerable, and am not afraid to stake the credit of my work upon *them* with her, or with any living wight, especially one who understands the original. I do not mean that even they are finished, for I shall examine and cross examine them yet again, and so you may tell her, but I know that they will not disgrace me; whereas it is so long since I have looked at the Odyssey that I know nothing at all about it. They shall set sail from Olney on Monday morning in the Diligence, and will reach you I hope in the evening. As soon as she has done with them I shall be glad to have them again, for the time

draws near when I shall want to give them the last touch.

I am delighted with Mrs. Bodham's kindness in giving me the only picture of my Mother that is to be found I suppose in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection, that her death, fifty-two years since, has not in the least abated. I remember her too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable. Every body loved her, and with an amiable character so impressed upon all her features, every body was sure to do so.

I have a very affectionate, and a very clever letter from Johnson, who promises me the transcript of the books entrusted to him in a few days. I have a great love for that young man, he has some drops of the same stream in his veins that once animated the original of that dear picture.

W. C.

LETTER XCI.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, Feb. 27, 1790.

MY DEAREST ROSE,

Whom I thought withered, and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive: nothing could give me greater pleasure than to know it, and to learn it from yourself. I loved you dearly when you were a child, and love you not a jot the less for having ceased to be so. Every creature that bears any affinity to my Mother is dear to me, and you, the Daughter of her Brother, are but one remove distant from her: I love you therefore, and love you much, both for her sake, and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object, that I see at night, and of course the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I com-

pleted my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought in the days of my child-hood much to resemble my Mother, and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed to be a competent judge, can trace both her, and my late Uncle, your Father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little I would hope both of his and of her ———, I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good nature*. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, that whatever I am, I love you all.

I account it a happy event that brought the dear boy, your Nephew, to my knowledge, and that

breaking through all the restraints which his natural bashfulness imposed on him, he determined to find me out. He is amiable to a degree that I have seldom seen, and I often long with impatience to see him again.

My dearest Cousin, what shall I say in answer to your affectionate invitation? I *must* say this, I cannot come now, nor soon, and I wish with all my heart I could. But I will tell you what may be done, perhaps, and it will answer to us just as well: you, and Mr. Bodham can come to Weston, can you not? The summer is at hand, there are roads and wheels to bring you, and you are neither of you translating Homer. I am crazed that I cannot ask you altogether for want of house-room, but for Mr. Bodham, and yourself, we have good room, and equally good for any third, in the shape of a Donne, whether named Hewitt, Bodham, Balls, or Johnson, or by whatever name distinguished. Mrs. Hewitt has particular claims upon me; she was my playfellow at Berkhamstead, and has a share in my warmest affections. Pray tell her so! Neither do I at all forget my Cousin Harriet. She and I have been many a time merry at Catfield, and have made the parsonage ring with laughter. Give my love to her. Assure yourself, my

dearest Cousin, that I shall receive you as if you were my Sister, and Mrs. Unwin is, for my sake, prepared to do the same. When she has seen you, she will love you for your own.

I am much obliged to Mr. Bodham, for his kindness to my Homer, and with my love to you all, and with Mrs. Unwin's kind respects, am,

My dear, dear Rose,

Ever yours.

W. C.

P. S.—I mourn the death of your poor brother Castres, whom I should have seen had he lived, and should have seen with the greatest pleasure. He was an amiable boy, and I was very fond of him.

Still another P. S.—I find on consulting Mrs. Unwin, that I have under-rated our capabilities, and that we have not only room for you, and Mr. Bodham, but for two of your sex, and even for your Nephew into the bargain. We shall be happy to have it all so occupied.

Your Nephew tells me that his Sister in the qualities of the mind, resembles you; that is enough to make her dear to me, and I beg you will assure

her that she is so. Let it not be long before I hear from you.

LETTER XCII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, Feb. 28, 1790.

MY DEAR COUSIN JOHN,

I have much wished to hear from you, and though you are welcome to write to Mrs. Unwin as often as you please, I wish myself to be numbered among your correspondents.

I shall find time to answer you, doubt it not! Be as busy as we may, we can always find time to do what is agreeable to us. By the way had you a letter from Mrs Unwin? I am witness that she addressed one to you before you went into Norfolk; but your mathematico-poetical head forgot to acknowledge the receipt of it.

I was never more pleased in my life than to learn, and to learn from herself, that my dearest Rose*

* Mrs. Ann Bodham.

is still alive. Had she not engaged me to love her by the sweetness of her character when a child, she would have done it effectually now, by making me the most acceptable present in the world, my own dear Mother's picture. I am perhaps the only person living who remembers her, but I remember her well, and can attest on my own knowledge, the truth of the resemblance. Amiable and elegant as the countenance is, such exactly was her own; she was one of the tenderest parents, and so just a copy of her is therefore to me invaluable.

I wrote yesterday to my Rose, to tell her all this, and to thank her for her kindness in sending it! Neither do I forget your kindness who intimated to her that I should be happy to possess it.

She invites me into Norfolk, but alas she might as well invite the house in which I dwell; for all other considerations and impediments apart, how is it possible that a translator of Homer should lumber to such a distance! But though I cannot comply with her kind invitation, I have made myself the best amends in my power, by inviting her, and all the family of Donne's, to Weston. Perhaps we could not accommodate them all at once, but in succession we could; and can at any time find room for five, three of them

being females, and one a married one. You are a mathematician; tell me then how five persons can be lodged in three beds, (two males and three females) and I shall have good hope that you will proceed a senior optime? It would make me happy to see our house so furnished. As to yourself, whom I know to be a *subscalarian*, or a man that sleeps under the stairs, I should have no objection at all, neither could you possibly have any yourself to the garret, as a place in which you might be disposed of with great felicity of accommodation.

I thank you much for your services in the transcribing way, and would by no means have you despair of an opportunity to serve me in the same way yet again;—write to me soon, and tell me when I shall see you.

I have not said the half that I have to say, but breakfast is at hand, which always terminates my epistles.

What have you done with your poem? The trimming that it procured you here, has not, I hope, put you out of conceit with it entirely; you are more than equal to the alteration that it needs. Only remember, that in writing, perspicuity is always more than half the battle. The want of it is the ruin of

more than half the poetry that is published. A meaning that does not stare you in the face, is as bad as no meaning, because no body will take the pains to poke for it. So now adieu for the present. Beware of killing yourself with problems, for if you do, you will never live to be another Sir Isaac.

Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances attend you; Lady Hesketh is much disposed to love you; perhaps those who know you have some little tendency the same way.

LETTER XCIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 8, 1790.

MY DEAREST COUSIN

I thank thee much, and oft, for negociating so well this poetical concern with Mrs. ——, and for sending me her opinion in her own hand. I should be unreasonable indeed not to be highly gratified by it, and I like it the better for

being modestly expressed. It is, as you know, and it shall be some months longer, my daily business to polish and improve what is done, that when the whole shall appear, she may find her expectations answered. I am glad also that thou didst send her the sixteenth Odyssey, though as I said before, I know not at all at present, whereof it is made: but I am sure that thou wouldst not have sent it, hadst thou not conceived a good opinion of it thyself, and thought that it would do me credit. It was very kind in thee to sacrifice to this Minerva on my account.

For my sentiments on the subject of the Test Act, I cannot do better than refer thee to my poem, entitled and called, "Expostulation." I have there expressed myself not much in its favor; considering it in a religious view; and in a political one, I like it not a jot the better. I am neither Tory, nor High Churchman, but an old Whig, as my Father was before me; and an enemy, consequently, to all tyrannical impositions.

Mrs. Unwin bids me return thee many thanks for thy inquiries so kindly made concerning her health. She is a little better than of late, but has

been ill continually ever since last November. Every thing that could try patience, and submission, she has had, and her submission and patience have answered in the trial, though mine, on her account, have often failed sadly.

I have a letter from Johnson, who tells me that he has sent his transcript to you, begging at the same time more copy. Let him have it by all means; he is an industrious youth, and I love him dearly. I told him that you are disposed to love him a little. A new poem is born on the receipt of my Mother's picture. Thou shalt have it.

W. C.

LETTER XCIV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, March 11, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to hear from you, for a line from you gives me always much pleasure, but was not much gladdened by the contents of your letter. The state of your health, which I have learned more accurately perhaps from my Cousin,

except in this last instance, than from yourself, has alarmed me, and even she has collected her information upon that subject more from your looks, than from your own acknowledgements. To complain much and often of our indispositions, does not always insure the pity of the hearer, perhaps sometimes forfeits it, but to dissemble them altogether, or at least to suppress the worst, is attended ultimately with an inconvenience greater still; the secret will out at last, and our friends unprepared to receive it, are doubly distressed about us. In saying this I squint a little at Mrs. Unwin, who will read it; it is with her, as with you, the only subject on which she practices any dissimulation at all; the consequence is, that when she is much indisposed, I never believe myself in possession of the whole truth, live in constant expectation of hearing something worse, and at the long run am seldom disappointed. It seems therefore, as on all other occasions, so even in this, the better course on the whole to appear what we are; not to lay the fears of our friends asleep by cheerful looks, which do not probably belong to us, or by letters written as if we were well, when in fact we are very much otherwise. On condition however, that you

act differently toward me for the future, I will pardon the past, and she may gather from my clemency shewn to you, some hopes, on the same conditions, of similar clemency to herself.

W. C.

LETTER XCV.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, March 21, 1790.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

I shall only observe on the subject of your absence, that you have stretched *it* since you went, and have made it a week longer. Weston is sadly *inked* without you; and here are two of us, who will be heartily glad to see you again. I believe you are happier at home than any where, which is a comfortable belief to your neighbours, because it affords assurance, that since you are neither likely to ramble for pleasure, nor to meet with any avocations of business, while Weston shall continue to be your home, it will not often want you.

The two first books of my Iliad have been sub-

mitted to the inspection and scrutiny of a great critic of your sex, at the instance of my Cousin, as you may suppose. The lady is mistress of more tongues than a few; (it is to be hoped she is single) and particularly she is mistress of the Greek. She returned them with expressions, that if any thing could make a poet prouder than all poets naturally are, would have made me so. I tell you this, because I know that you all interest yourselves in the success of the said Iliad.

My periwig is arrived, and is the very perfection of all periwigs, having only one fault; which is, that my head will only go into the first half of it, the other half, or the upper part of it, continuing still unoccupied. My artist in this way at Olney has however undertaken to make the whole of it tenantable, and then I shall be twenty years younger than you have ever seen me.

I heard of your birth-day very early in the morning; the news came from the steeple.

W. C.

LETTER XCVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 22, 1790.

I rejoice, my dearest Cousin, that my MS. have roamed the earth so successfully, and have met with no disaster. The single book excepted, that went to the bottom of the Thames and rose again, they have been fortunate without exception. I am not superstitious, but have nevertheless as good a right to believe that adventure an omen, and a favorable one, as Swift had to interpret, as he did, the loss of a fine fish, which he had no sooner laid on the bank; than it flounced into the water again. This he tells us himself, he always considered as a type of his future disappointments: and why may not I as well consider the marvellous recovery of my lost book from the bottom of the Thames, as typical of its future prosperity? To say the truth, I have no fears now about the success of my Translation, though in time past I have had many. I knew there was a style somewhere, could I but find it, in which Homer ought to be rendered, and which alone would

suit him. Long time I blundered about it, ere I could attain to any decided judgment on the matter; at first I was betrayed by a desire of accommodating my language to the simplicity of his, into much of the quaintness that belonged to our writers of the fifteenth century. In the course of many revisals I have delivered myself from this evil, I believe, entirely; but I have done it slowly, and as a man separates himself from his mistress when he is going to marry. I had so strong a predilection in favor of this style at first, that I was crazed to find that others were not as much enamoured with it as myself. At every passage of that sort which I obliterated, I groaned bitterly, and said to myself, I am spoiling my work to please those who have no taste for the simple graces of antiquity. But in measure, as I adopted a more modern phraseology, I became a convert to their opinion, and in the last revisal, which I am now making, am not sensible of having spared a single expression of the obsolete kind. I see my work so much improved by this alteration, that I am filled with wonder at my own backwardness to assent to the necessity of it, and the more when I consider that Milton, with whose manner I account myself intimately acquainted, is never quaint, never twangs

through the nose, but is every where grand and elegant, without resorting to musty antiquity for his beauties. On the contrary, he took a long stride forward, left the language of his own day far behind him, and anticipated the expressions of a century yet to come.

I have now, as I said, no longer any doubt of the event, but I will give thee a shilling if thou wilt tell me what I shall say in my Preface. It is an affair of much delicacy, and I have as many opinions about it as there are whims in a weathercock.

Send my mss. and thine when thou wilt. In a day or two I shall enter on the last Iliad, when I have finished it I shall give the Odyssey one more reading, and shall therefore shortly have occasion for the copy in thy possession, but you see that there is no need to hurry.

I leave the little space for Mrs. Unwin's use, who means, I believe, to occupy it.

I am evermore thine most truly,

W. C.

Postscript in the hand of Mrs. Unwin.

You cannot imagine how much your Ladyship would oblige your unworthy servant, if you would

be so good to let me know in what point I differ from you. All that at present I can say is, that I will readily sacrifice my own opinion, unless I can give you a substantial reason for adhering to it.

LETTER XCVII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, March 23, 1790.

Your mss. arrived safe in New Norfolk-street, and I am much obliged to you for your labours. Were you now at Weston I could furnish you with employment for some weeks, and shall perhaps be equally able to do it in summer, for I have lost my best amanuensis in this place, Mr. George Throckmorton, who is gone to Bath.

You are a man to be envied, who have never read the Odyssey, which is one of the most amusing story-books in the world. There is also much of the finest poetry in the world to be found in it, notwithstanding all that Longinus has insinuated to the contrary. His comparison of the Iliad and Odyssey to

the meridian, and to the declining sun, is pretty, but I am persuaded, not just. The prettiness of it seduced him; he was otherwise too judicious a reader of Homer to have made it. I can find in the latter no symptoms of impaired ability, none of the effects of age; on the contrary, it seems to me a certainty, that Homer, had he written the Odyssey in his youth, could not have written it better; and if the Iliad in his old age, that he would have written it just as well. A critic would tell me, that instead of *written*, I should have said *composed*. Very likely—but I am not writing to one of that snarling generation!

My boy, I long to see thee again. It has happened some way or other, that Mrs. Unwin and I have conceived a great affection for thee. That I should, is the less to be wondered at, (because thou art a shred of my own Mother): neither is the wonder great, that she should fall into the same predicament: for she loves every thing that I love. You will observe, that your own personal right to be beloved makes no part of the consideration. There is nothing that I touch with so much tenderness as the vanity of a young man; because, I know how extremely susceptible he is of impressions that might hurt him in that particular part of his composition.

If you should ever prove a coxcomb, from which character you stand just now at a greater distance than any young man I know, it shall never be said that I have made you one; no, you will gain nothing by me but the honor of being much valued by a poor poet, who can do you no good while he lives, and has nothing to leave you when he dies. If you can be contented to be dear to me on these conditions, so you shall; but other terms, more advantageous than these, or more inviting, none have I to propose.

Farewell. Puzzle not yourself about a subject when you write to either of us, every thing is subject enough from those we love.

W. C.

LETTER XCVIII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, April 17, 1790.

Your letter, that now lies before me, is almost three weeks old, and therefore of full age to receive an answer, which it shall have

without delay, if the interval between the present moment and that of breakfast should prove sufficient for the purpose.

Yours to Mrs. Unwin was received yesterday, for which she will thank you in due time. I have also seen, and have now in my desk, your letter to Lady Hesketh; she sent it thinking that it would divert me; in which she was not mistaken. I shall tell her when I write to her next, that you long to receive a line from her. Give yourself no trouble on the subject of the politic device you saw good to recur to, when you presented me with your manuscript; it was an innocent deception, at least it could harm nobody save yourself; an effect which it did not fail to produce; and since the punishment followed it so closely, by me at least, it may very well be forgiven. You ask, how I can tell that you are not addicted to practices of the deceptive kind? And certainly, if the little time that I have had to study you, were alone to be considered, the question would not be unreasonable; but in general a man who reaches my years, finds

"That long experience does attain
"To something like prophetic strain."

I am very much of Lavater's opinion, and persuaded that faces are as legible as books, only with these circumstances to recommend them to our perusal, that they are read in much less time, and are much less likely to deceive us. Yours gave me a favorable impression of you the moment I beheld it, and though I shall not tell you in particular what I saw in it, for reasons mentioned in my last, I will add, that I have observed in you nothing since, that has not confirmed the opinion I then formed in your favor. In fact, I cannot recollect that my skill in physiognomy has ever deceived me, and I should add more on this subject had I room.

When you have shut up your mathematical books, you must give yourself to the study of Greek; not merely that you may be able to read Homer, and the other Greek classics with ease, but the Greek Testament, and the Greek fathers also. Thus qualified, and by the aid of your fiddle into the bargain, together with some portion of the grace of God (without which nothing can be done) to enable you to look well to your flock, when you shall get one, you will be set up for a parson. In which character, if I live to see you in it, I shall expect and hope that you

will make a very different figure from most of your fraternity.

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER XCIX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, April 19, 1790.

MY DEAREST COZ.

I thank thee for my Cousin Johnson's letter, which diverted me. I had one from him lately, in which he expressed an ardent desire of a line from you, and the delight he would feel in receiving it. I know not whether you will have the charity to satisfy his longings, but mention the matter, thinking it possible that you may. A letter from a lady to a youth immersed in mathematics must be singularly pleasant.

I am finishing Homer backward, having begun at the last book, and designing to persevere in that crab-like fashion, till I arrive at the first. This may remind you perhaps of a certain poet's prisoner in the Bastile (thank Heaven! in the Bastile now no

more) counting the nails in the door for variety's sake in all directions. I find so little to do in the last revisal, that I shall soon reach the Odyssey, and soon want those books of it which are in thy possession; but the two first of the Iliad, which are also in thy possession, much sooner; thou may'st therefore send them by the first fair opportunity. I am in high spirits on this subject, and think that I have at last licked the clumsy cub into a shape that will secure to it the favorable notice of the public. Let not —— retard me, and I shall hope to get it out next winter.

I am glad that thou hast sent the General those verses on my Mother's picture. They will amuse him—only I hope that he will not miss my Mother-in-law, and think that she ought to have made a third. On such an occasion it was not possible to mention her with any propriety. I rejoice at the General's recovery; may it prove a perfect one.

W. C.

LETTER C.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, April 30, 1790.

To my old friend Dr. Madan, thou could'st not have spoken better than thou did'st. Tell him, I beseech you, that I have not forgotten him; tell him also, that to my heart and home he will be always welcome; nor he only, but all that are his. His judgment of my translation gave me the highest satisfaction, because I know him to be a rare old Grecian.

The General's approbation of my picture verses gave me also much pleasure. I wrote them not without tears, therefore I presume it may be that they are felt by others. Should he offer me my Father's picture I shall gladly accept it. A melancholy pleasure is better than none, nay verily, better than most. He had a sad task imposed on him, but no man could acquit himself of such a one with more discretion, or with more tenderness. The death of the unfortunate young man reminded me of those lines in Lycidas,

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine!——

How beautiful!

W. C.

LETTER CI.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, May 10, 1790.

MY DEAR MRS. FROG,*

You have by this time (I presume) heard from the Doctor, whom I desired to present to you our best affections, and to tell you that we are well. He sent an urchin (I do not mean a hedge-hog, commonly called an urchin in old times, but a boy, commonly so called at present) expecting that he would find you at Buckland's, whither he supposed you gone on Thursday. He sent him charged

* The sportive title generally bestowed by Cowper on his amiable friends the Throckmortons.

with divers articles, and among others with letters, or at least with a letter: which I mention, that if the boy should be lost, together with his dispatches, past all possibility of recovery, you may yet know that the Doctor stands acquitted of not writing. That he is utterly lost (that is to say, the boy—for, the Doctor being the last antecedent as the grammarians say, you might otherwise suppose that he was intended) is the more probable, because he was never four miles from his home before, having only travelled at the side of a plough-team; and when the Doctor gave him his direction to Buckland's, he asked, very naturally, if that was in England. So what has become of him Heaven knows!

I do not know, that any adventures have presented themselves since your departure worth mentioning, except that the rabbit, that infested your wilderness has been shot for devouring your carnations; and that I myself have been in some danger of being devoured in like manner by a great dog, viz. Pearson's. But I wrote him a letter on Friday (I mean a letter to Pearson, not to his dog, which I mention to prevent mistakes—for the said last antecedent might occasion them in this place also) informing him, that

unless he tied up his great mastiff in the day-time, I would send him a worse thing, commonly called and known by the name of an attorney. When I go forth to ramble in the fields, I do not sally like Don Quixote, with a purpose of encountering monsters, if any such can be found; but am a peaceable poor gentleman, and a poet, who mean nobody any harm, the fox-hunters, and the two universities of this land excepted.

I cannot learn from any creature whether the Turnpike bill is alive or dead. So ignorant am I, and by such ignoramusses surrounded. But if I know little else, this at least I know, that I love you, and Mr. Frog; that I long for your return, and that I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best affections,

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER CII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 28, 1790.

MY DEAREST COZ.

I thank thee for the offer of thy best services on this occasion. But Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them! It would be a leaden extinguisher, clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable, and therefore I am sure that thou, of all my friends, would'st least wish me to wear it.

Adieu,

Ever thine—in Homer—hurry.

W. C.

LETTER CIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, June 3, 1790.

You will wonder, when I tell you, that I, even I, am considered by people, who live at a great distance, as having interest and influence sufficient to procure a place at court, for those who may happen to want one. I have accordingly been applied to within these few days by a Welchman, with a wife and many children, to get him made Poet-laureat as fast as possible. If thou wouldst wish to make the world merry twice a year, thou can'st not do better than procure the office for him. I will promise thee that he shall afford thee a hearty laugh in return every birth-day, and every new year. He is an honest man.

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CIV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, June 7, 1790.

MY DEAR JOHN,

You know my engagements, and are consequently able to account for my silence. I will not therefore waste time and paper in mentioning them, but will only say, that added to those, with which you are acquainted, I have had other hinderances, such as business, and a disorder of my spirits, to which I have been all my life subject. At present I am, thank God! perfectly well both in mind and body. Of you I am always mindful, whether I write or not, and very desirous to see you. You will remember, I hope, that you are under engagements to us, and, as soon as your Norfolk friends can spare you, will fulfil them. Give us all the time you can, and all that they can spare to us!

You never pleased me more than when you told me you had abandoned your mathematical pursuits. It grieved me to think, that you were wasting your time merely to gain a little Cambridge fame, not worth your having. I cannot be contented, that your

renown should thrive nowhere, but on the banks of the Cam. Conceive a nobler ambition, and never let your honor be circumscribed by the paltry dimensions of an university! It is well that, you have already, as you observe, acquired sufficient information in that science to enable you to pass creditably such examinations as I suppose you must hereafter undergo. Keep what you have gotten, and be content. More is needless.

You could not apply to a worse than I am to advise you concerning your studies. I was never a regular student myself, but lost the most valuable years of my life in an attorney's office, and in the Temple. I will not therefore give myself airs, and affect to know what I know not. The affair is of great importance to you, and you should be directed in it by a wiser than I. To speak however in very general terms on the subject, it seems to me, that your chief concern is with history, natural philosophy, logic, and divinity. As to metasphysics, I know little about them. But the very little, that I do know, has not taught me to admire them. Life is too short to afford time even for serious trifles. Pursue what you know to be attainable, make truth your object, and your studies will make you a wise man! Let

your divinity, if I may advise, be the divinity of the glorious Reformation: I mean in contradiction to Arminianism, and all the *isms* that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance.

The divinity of the Reformation is called Calvinism, but injuriously. It has been that of the church of Christ in all ages. It is the divinity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul's master, who met him in his way to Damascus.

I have written in great haste, that I might finish, if possible, before breakfast. Adieu! Let us see you soon; the sooner the better. Give my love to the silent lady, the Rose, and all my friends around you!

W. C.

LETTER CV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, June 8, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

Among the many who love and esteem you, there is none who rejoices more in your felicity than myself. Far from blaming, I com-

mend you much for connecting yourself, young as as you are, with a well chosen companion for life. Entering on the state with uncontaminated morals, you have the best possible prospect of happiness, and will be secure against a thousand and ten thousand temptations to which, at an early period of life, in such a Babylon as you must necessarily inhabit, you would otherwise have been exposed. I see it too in the light you do, as likely to be advantageous to you in your profession. Men of business have a better opinion of a candidate for employment, who is married, because he has given bond to the world, as you observe, and to himself, for diligence, industry, and attention. It is altogether therefore a subject of much congratulation; and mine, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's, is very sincere. Samson at his marriage, proposed a riddle to the Philistines. I am no Samson, neither are you a Philistine. Yet expound to me the following if you can!

What are they, which stand at a distance from each other, and meet without ever moving!

Should you be so fortunate as to guess it, you may propose it to the company, when you celebrate your nuptials; and if you can win thirty changes of raiment by it, as Samson did by his, let me tell you,

they will be no contemptible acquisition to a young beginner.

You will not, I hope, forget your way to Weston, in consequence of your marriage, where you, and yours, will be always welcome.

W. C.

LETTER CVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 17, 1790.

MY DEAR COZ.

Here am I, at eight in the morning, in full dress, going a visiting to Chicheley. We are a strong party, and fill two chaises; Mrs. F. the elder, and Mrs. G. in one; Mrs. F. the younger, and myself in another. Were it not that I shall find Chesters at the end of my journey, I should be inconsolable. That expectation alone supports my spirits; and even with this prospect before me, when I saw this moment a poor old woman coming up the lane, opposite my window, I could not help sighing, and saying to myself—"Poor, but happy old woman!

" Thou art exempted by thy situation in life from " riding in chaises, and making thyself fine in a " morning, happier therefore in my account than " I, who am under the cruel necessity of doing both. " Neither dost thou write verses, neither hast thou " ever heard of the name of Homer, whom I am mi- " serable to abandon for a whole morning!" This, and more of the same sort passed in my mind on seeing the old woman abovesaid.

The troublesome business with which I filled my last letter, is (I hope) by this time concluded, and Mr. Archdeacon satisfied. I can, to be sure, but ill afford to pay fifty pounds for another man's negligence, but would be happy to pay an hundred rather than be treated as if I were insolvent; threatened with attornies and bums. One would think, that, living where I live, I might be exempted from trouble. But alas! as the philosophers often affirm, there is no nook under Heaven in which trouble cannot enter; and perhaps had there never been one philosopher in the world this is a truth, that would not have been always altogether a secret.

I have made two inscriptions lately at the request of Thomas Gifford, Esq. who is sowing twenty acres with acorns on one side of his house, and twenty

acres with ditto on the other. He erects two memorials of stone on the occasion, that when posterity shall be curious to know the age of the oaks, their curiosity may be gratified.

1.

INSCRIPTION.

Other stones the æra tell
When some feeble mortal fell.
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.

Anno 1790.

2.

INSCRIPTION.

Reader! Behold a monument
That asks no sigh or tear,
Though it perpetuate the event
Of a great burial here.

Anno 1791.

My works therefore will not all perish, or will not all perish soon, for he has ordered his lapidary to

cut the characters very deep, and in stone extremely hard. It is not in vain then, that I have so long exercised the business of a poet. I shall at last reap the reward of my labours, and be immortal probably for many years.

Ever thine,

W. C.

LETTER CVII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 22, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

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Villoison makes no mention of the serpent, whose skin or bowels, or perhaps both, were honored with the Iliad and Odyssey inscribed upon them. But I have conversed with a living eye-witness of an African serpent long enough to have afforded skin and guts for the purpose. In Africa there are ants

also which frequently destroy these monsters. They are not much larger than ours, but they travel in a column of immense length, and eat through every thing that opposes them. Their bite is like a spark of fire. When these serpents have killed their prey, lion or tiger or any other large animal, before they swallow him, they take a considerable circuit round about the carcase, to see if the ants are coming, because when they have gorged their prey, they are unable to escape them. They are nevertheless sometimes surprised by them in their unwieldy state, and the ants make a passage through them. Now if you thought your own story of Homer, bound in snake-skin, worthy of three notes of admiration, you cannot do less than add six to mine, confessing at the same time, that if I put you to the expence of a letter, I do not make you pay your money for nothing. But this account I had from a person of most unimpeached veracity.

I rejoice with you in the good Bishop's removal to St. Asaph, and especially because the Norfolk parsons much more resemble the ants above-mentioned, than he the serpent. He is neither of vast size, nor unwieldy, nor voracious, neither, I dare say, does he sleep after dinner, according to the practice

of the said serpent. But, harmless as he is, I am mistaken if his mutinous clergy did not sometimes disturb his rest, and if he did not find their bite, though they could not actually eat through him, in a degree resembling fire. Good men like him, and peaceable should have good and peaceable folks to deal with, and I heartily wish him such in his new diocese. But if he will keep the clergy to their business, he shall have trouble, let him go where he may; and this is boldly spoken, considering, that I speak it to one of that reverend body. But ye are like Jeremiah's basket of figs. Some of you could not be better, and some of you are stark naught. Ask the bishop himself, if this be not true!

W. C.

LETTER CVIII.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, June 29, 1790.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

It is true, that I did sometimes complain to Mrs. Unwin of your long silence. But it

is likewise true, that I made many excuses for you in my own mind, and did not feel myself at all inclined to be angry, nor even much to wonder. There is an awkwardness, and a difficulty in writing to those whom distance and length of time have made in a manner new to us, that naturally gives us a check, when you would otherwise be glad to address them. But a time, I hope, is near at hand, when you and I shall be effectually delivered from all such constraints, and correspond as fluently as if our intercourse had suffered much less interruption.

You must not suppose, my dear, that though I may be said to have lived many years with a pen in my hand, I am myself altogether at my ease on this tremendous occasion. Imagine rather, and you will come nearer to the truth, that when I placed this sheet before me, I asked myself more than once, "how shall I fill it? One subject indeed presents itself, the pleasant prospect, that opens upon me of our coming once more together, but that once exhausted, with what shall I proceed?" Thus I questioned myself; but finding neither end nor profit of such questions, I bravely resolved to dismiss them all at once, and to engage in the great enterprize of a letter to my quondam Rose at a venture——There is great

truth in a rant of Nat. Lee's, or of Dryden's, I know not which, who makes an enamoured youth say to his mistress,

And nonsense shall be eloquence in love.

For certain it is, that they who truly love one another, are not very nice examiners of each other's style or matter; if an epistle comes, it is always welcome, though it be perhaps neither so wise, nor so witty, as one might have wished to make it. And now, my Cousin, let me tell thee how much I feel myself obliged to Mr. Bodham, for the readiness he expresses to accept my invitation. Assure him that, stranger as he is to me at present, and natural as the dread of strangers has ever been to me, I shall yet receive him with open arms, because he is your husband, and loves you dearly. That consideration alone will endear him to me, and I dare say that I shall not find it his only recommendation to my best affections. May the health of his relation, (his Mother I suppose) be soon restored, and long continued, and may nothing melancholy, of what kind soever, interfere to prevent our joyful meeting. Between the present moment and September our house is clear for your reception,

and you have nothing to do but to give us a day or two's notice of your coming. In September we expect Lady Hesketh, and I only regret that our house is not large enough to hold all together, for were it possible that you could meet, you would love each other.

Mrs. Unwin bids me offer you her best love. She is never well, but always patient, and always cheerful, and feels before hand that she shall be loth to part with you.

My love to all the dear Donnes of every name! —write soon, no matter about what.

W. C.

LETTER CIX.

To Lady HESKETH.

July 7, 1790.

Instead of beginning with the saffron-vested morning, to which Homer invites me, on a morning that has no saffron vest to boast, I shall begin with you.

It is irksome to us both to wait so long as we must for you, but we are willing to hope that by a longer stay you will make us amends for all this tedious procrastination.

Mrs. Unwin has made known her whole case to Mr. Gregson, whose opinion of it has been very consolatory to me: he says indeed it is a case perfectly out of the reach of all physical aid, but at the same time not at all dangerous. Constant pain is a sad grievance, whatever part is affected, and she is hardly ever free from an aching head, as well as an uneasy side, but patience is an anodyne of God's own preparation, and of that he gives her largely.

The French, who like all lively folks are extreme in every thing, are such in their zeal for freedom, and if it were possible to make so noble a cause ridiculous, their manner of promoting it could not fail to do so. Princes and peers reduced to a plain gentlemanship, and gentles reduced to a level with their own lacqueys, are excesses of which they will repent hereafter. Difference of rank and subordination, are, I believe, of God's appointment, and consequently essential to the well-being of society: but what we mean by fanaticism in religion, is exactly that which animates their politics, and unless time

should sober them, they will, after all, be an unhappy people. Perhaps it deserves not much to be wondered at, that at their first escape from tyrannical shackles, they should act extravagantly, and treat their kings as they have sometimes treated their idols. To these however they are reconciled in due time again, but their respect for monarchy is at an end. They want nothing now but a little English sobriety, and that they want extremely: I heartily wish them some wit in their anger, for it were great pity that so many millions should be miserable for want of it.

LETTER CX.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, July 8, 1790.

MY DEAR JOHNNY,

You do well to perfect yourself on the violin. Only beware that an amusement so very bewitching as music, especially when we produce it ourselves, do not steal from you ALL those hours that should be given to study. I can be

well content that it should serve you as a refreshment after severer exercises, but not that it should engross you wholly. Your own good sense will most probably dictate to you this precaution, and I might have spared you the trouble of it, but I have a degree of zeal for your proficiency in more important pursuits, that would not suffer me to suppress it.

Having delivered my conscience by giving you this sage admonition, I will convince you that I am a censor not over and above severe, by acknowledging in the next place that I have known very good performers on the violin, very learned also; and my Cousin, Dr. Spencer Madan, is an instance.

I am delighted that you have engaged your Sister to visit us; for I say to myself, if John be amiable, what must Catherine be? For we males, be we angelic as we may, are always surpassed by the ladies. But know this, that I shall not be in love with either of you, if you stay with us only a few days, for you talk of a week or so. Correct this erratum, I beseech you, and convince us by a much longer continuance here, that it was one.

W. C.

Mrs. Unwin has never been well since you saw

her. You are not passionately fond of letter-writing, I perceive, who have dropped a lady; but you will be a loser by the bargain; for one letter of hers in point of real utility, and sterling value, is worth twenty of mine, and you will never have another from her till you have earned it.

W. C.

LETTER CXI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, July 31, 1790.

You have by this time, I presume, answered Lady Hesketh's letter? if not answer it without delay, and this injunction I give you, judging that it may not be entirely unnecessary, for though I have seen you but once, and only for two or three days, I have found out that you are a scatter-brain, I made the discovery perhaps the sooner, because in this you very much resemble myself, who in the course of my life have, through mere carelessness and inattention, lost many advantages; an insuperable shyness has also deprived me of many.

And here again there is a resemblance between us. You will do well to guard against both, for of both, I believe, you have a considerable share as well as myself.

We long to see you again, and are only concerned at the short stay you propose to make with us. If time should seem to you as short at Weston, as it seems to us, your visit here will be gone "as a dream when one awaketh, or as a watch in the night."

It is a life of dreams, but the pleasantest one naturally wishes longest.

I shall find employment for you, having made already some part of the fair copy of the Odyssey a foul one. I am revising it for the last time, and spare nothing that I can mend. The Iliad is finished.

If you have Donne's poems bring them with you, for I have not seen them many years, and should like to look them over.

You may treat us too, if you please, with a little of your music, for I seldom hear any, and delight much in it. You need not fear a rival, for we have but two fiddles in the neighbourhood——one a gar-

dener's, the other a taylor's: terrible performers both!

W. C.

LETTER CXII.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, Sep. 9, 1790.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

I am truly sorry to be forced after all to resign the hope of seeing you and Mr. Bodham at Weston this year: the next may possibly be more propitious, and I heartily wish it may. Poor Catharine's unseasonable indisposition has also cost us a disappointment which we much regret, and were it not that Johnny has made shift to reach us, we should think ourselves completely unfortunate. But him we have, and him we will hold as long as we can, so expect not very soon to see him in Norfolk. He is so harmless, cheerful, gentle, and good-tempered, and I am so entirely at my ease with him, that I cannot surrender him without a *needs must*, even to those who have a superior claim upon him. He left

us yesterday morning, and whither do you think he is gone, and on what errand? Gone, as sure as you are alive, to London, and to convey my Homer to the bookseller's. But he will return the day after to-morrow, and I mean to part with him no more, till necessity shall force us asunder. Suspect me not, my Cousin, of being such a monster as to have imposed this task myself on your kind Nephew, or even to have thought of doing it. It happened that one day, as we chatted by the fire-side, I expressed a wish that I could hear of some trusty body going to London, to whose care I might consign my voluminous labours, the work of five years. For I purpose never to visit that city again myself, and should have been uneasy to have left a charge, of so much importance to me, altogether to the care of a stage-coachman. Johnny had no sooner heard my wish, than offering himself to the service, he fulfilled it; and his offer was made in such terms, and accompanied with a countenance and manner expressive of so much alacrity, that unreasonable as I thought it at first, to give him so much trouble, I soon found that I should mortify him by a refusal. He is gone therefore with a box full of poetry, of which I think nobody will plunder him. He has only to

say what it is, and there is no commodity I think a free-booter would covet less.

W. C.

LETTER CXIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Sep. 18, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter was particularly welcome to me, not only because it came after a long silence, but because it brought me good news —news of your marriage, and consequently, I trust, of your happiness. May that happiness be durable as your lives, and may you be the *Felices ter et amplius* of whom Horace sings so sweetly! This is my sincere wish, and though expressed in prose, shall serve as your epithalamium. You comfort me when you say, that your marriage will not deprive us of the sight of you hereafter. If you do not wish that I should regret your union, you must make that assertion good as often as you have opportunity.

After perpetual versification during five years, I find myself at last a vacant man, and reduced to read for my amusement. My Homer is gone to the press, and you will imagine that I feel a void in consequence. The proofs however will be coming soon, and I shall avail myself, with all my force, of this last opportunity, to make my work as perfect as I wish it. I shall not therefore be long time destitute of employment, but shall have sufficient to keep me occupied all the winter and part of the ensuing spring, for Johnson purposes to publish either in March, April, or May——my very preface is finished. It did not cost me much trouble, being neither long nor learned. I have spoken my mind as freely as decency would permit, on the subject of Pope's version, allowing him, at the same time, all the merit to which I think him entitled. I have given my reasons for translating in blank verse, and hold some discourse on the mechanism of it, chiefly with a view to obviate the prejudices of some people against it. I expatiate a little on the manner, in which I think Homer ought to be rendered, and in which I have endeavoured to render him myself, and anticipated two or three cavils to which I foresee that I shall be liable from the ignorant, or uncandid; in order, if

possible to prevent them. These are the chief heads of my Preface, and the whole consists of about twelve pages.

It is possible when I come to treat with Johnson about the copy, I may want some person to negociate for me, and knowing no one so intelligent as yourself in books, or so well qualified to estimate their just value, I shall beg leave to resort to and rely on you as my negociator. But I will not trouble you unless I should see occasion. My cousin was the bearer of my MSS. to London. He went on purpose, and returns to-morrow. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate felicitations, added to my own, conclude me,

My dear friend,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

The trees of a colonade will solve my Riddle.

LETTER CXIV.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, Nov. 21, 1790.

MY DEAR COZ.

Our kindness to your nephew is no more than he must entitle himself to wherever he goes. His amiable disposition and manners will never fail to secure him a warm place in the affection of all who know him. The advice I gave respecting his poem on Audley End, was dictated by my love of him, and a sincere desire of his success. It is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biassed in our favor; and another to write what may please every body; because they who have no connection, or even knowledge of the author, will be sure to find fault if they can. My advice, however salutary and necessary as it seemed to me, was such as I dare not have given to a poet of less diffidence than he. Poets are to a proverb irritable, and he is the only one I ever knew who seems to have no spark of that fire about him. He has left us about a fortnight, and sorry we were to lose him; but had he

been my son, he must have gone, and I could not have regretted him more. If his sister be still with you, present my love to her, and tell her how much I wish to see them at Weston together.

Mrs. Hewitt probably remembers more of my childhood than I can recollect either of her's or my own; but this I recollect, that the days of that period were happy days compared with most I have seen since. There are few perhaps in the world who have not cause to look back with regret on the days of infancy; yet, to say the truth, I suspect some deception in this. For infancy itself has its cares, and though we cannot now conceive how trifles could affect us much, it is certain that they did. Trifles they appear now, but such they were not then.

W. C.

LETTER CXV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

MY BIRTH-DAY.

Friday, Nov. 26, 1790.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

I am happy that you have escaped from the claws of Euclid into the bosom of Jus-

tinian. It is useful, I suppose, to *every* man to be well grounded in the principles of jurisprudence, and I take it to be a branch of science that bids much fairer to enlarge the mind, and give an accuracy of reasoning, than all the mathematics in the world. Mind your studies, and you will soon be wiser than I can hope to be.

We had a visit on Monday from one of the first women in the world; in point of character, I mean, and accomplishments, the dowager Lady Spencer! I may receive, perhaps, some honors hereafter, should my translation speed according to my wishes, and the pains I have taken with it; but shall never recieve any that I shall esteem so highly. She is indeed worthy to whom I should dedicate, and may but my Odyssey prove as worthy of her, I shall have nothing to fear from the critics.

Yours,

My dear Johnny,

With much affection,

W. C.

LETTER XCVI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Nov. 30, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I will confess that I thought your letter somewhat tardy, though, at the same time, I made every excuse for you, except, as it seems, the right. *That* indeed was out of the reach of all possible conjecture. I could not guess that your silence was occasioned by your being occupied with either thieves or thief-takers. Since, however, the cause was such, I rejoice that your labours were not in vain, and that the free-booters, who had plundered your friend, are safe in limbo. I admire too, as much as I rejoice in your success, the indefatigable spirit, that prompted you to pursue, with such unremitting perseverance, an object not to be reached but at the expence of infinite trouble, and that must have led you into an acquaintance with scenes and characters the most horrible to a mind like yours. I see in this conduct the zeal and firmness of your friendship to whomsoever professed, and though I wanted not a proof of it myself, contemplate so unequivocal an

indication of what you really are, and of what I always believed you to be, with much pleasure. May you rise from the condition of an humble prosecutor, or witness, to the bench of judgment!

When your letter arrived, it found me with the worst and most obstinate cold, that I ever caught. This was one reason, why it had not a speedier answer. Another is, that except Tuesday morning, there is none in the week in which I am not engaged in the last revisal of my translation; the revisal I mean of my proof-sheets. To this business I give myself with an assiduity and attention truly admirable, and set an example, which if other poets could be apprised of, they would do well to follow. Miscarriages in authorship (I am persuaded) are as often to be ascribed to want of pains-taking, as to want of ability.

Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Unwin, and myself, often mention you, and always in terms, that though you would blush to hear them, you need not be ashamed of; at the same time wishing much that you could change our trio into a quartetto.

W. C.

LETTER CXVII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Dec. 1, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is plain, that you understand trap, as we used to say at school: for you begin with accusing me of long silence, conscious yourself at the same time, that you have been half a year in my debt, or thereabout. But I will answer your accusations with a boast, with a boast of having intended many a day to write to you again, notwithstanding your long insolvency. Your Brother, and Sister of Chicheley can both witness for me, that, weeks since, I testified such an intention, and if I did not execute it, it was not for want of good-will, but for want of leisure. When will you be able to glory of such designs, so liberal and magnificent, you, who have nothing to do by your own confession, but to grow fat and saucy? Add to all this, that I have had a violent cold, such as I never have but at the first approach of winter, and such as at that time I seldom escape. A fever accompanied it, and an incessant cough.

You measure the speed of printers, of my printer at least, rather by your own wishes than by any just standard. Mine (I believe) is as nimble a one as falls to the share of poets in general, though not nimble enough to satisfy either the author or his friends. I told you that my work would go to press in autumn, and so it did. But it had been six weeks in London, ere the press began to work upon it. About a month since, we began to print, and at the rate of nine sheets in a fortnight have proceeded to about the middle of the sixth Iliad. "No farther!" you say. I answer—No, nor even so far, without much scolding on my part, both at the bookseller and the printer. But courage, my friend! Fair and softly, as we proceed. We shall find our way through at last; and in confirmation of this hope, while I write this, another sheet arrives. I expect to publish in the spring.

I love and thank you for the ardent desire you express to hear me bruited abroad, *et per ora virûm volitantem*. For your encouragement I will tell you, that I read, myself at least, with wonderful complacence what I have done; and if the world, when it shall appear, do not like it as well as I, we will both

say and swear with Fluellin, that it is an ass and a fool (look you!) and a prating coxcomb.

I felt no ambition of the laurel. Else, though vainly perhaps, I had friends who would have made a stir on my behalf on that occasion. I confess, that when I learned the new condition of the office, that odes were no longer required and that the salary was increased, I felt not the same dislike of it. But I could neither go to court, not could I kiss hands, were it for a much more valuable consideration. Therefore never expect to hear that royal favors find out me!

Adieu, my dear old friend! I will send you a mortuary copy soon, and in the mean time remain.

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXVIII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, Dec. 18, 1790.

I perceive myself so flattered by the instances of illustrious success, mentioned in

your letter, that I feel all the amiable modesty, for which I was once so famous, sensibly giving way to a spirit of vain glory.

The King's-college subscription makes me proud—the effect that my verses have had on your two young friends, the mathematicians, makes me proud, and I am, if possible, prouder still of the contents of the letter that you inclosed.

You complained of being stupid, and sent me one of the cleverest letters. I have not complained of being stupid, and sent you one of the dullest.—But it is no matter, I never aim at any thing above the pitch of every day's scribble, when I write to those I love.

Homer proceeds my boy! We shall get through it in time, and (I hope) by the time appointed. We are now in the tenth Iliad. I expect the ladies every minute to breakfast. You have their best love. Mine attends the whole army of Donnes at Mattishall Green assembled. How happy should I find myself, were I but one of the party! My capering days are over. But do you caper for me, that you may give them some idea of the happiness I should feel were I in the midst of them!

W. C.

LETTER CXIX.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 4, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You would long since have received an answer to your last, had not the wicked Clerk of Northampton delayed to send me the printed copy of my annual dirge, which I waited to enclose. Here it is at last, and much good may it do the readers!

I have regretted, that I could not write sooner, especially because it well became me to reply as soon as possible to your kind inquiries after my health, which has been both better and worse since I wrote last. The cough was cured, or nearly so, when I received your letter, but I have lately been afflicted with a nervous fever, a malady formidable to me above all others, on account of the terror and dejection of spirits, that in my case always accompany it. I even look forward, for this reason, to the month now current, with the most miserable apprehensions; for in this month the distemper has twice seized me. I wish to be thankful however to the sovereign Dis-

penser both of health and sickness, that, though I have felt cause enough to tremble, he gives me now encouragement to hope that I may dismiss my fears, and expect, for this January at least, to escape it.

* * * *

The mention of quantity reminds me of a remark that I have seen somewhere, possibly in Johnson, to this purport, that the syllables in our language being neither long nor short, our verse accordingly is less beautiful than the verse of the Greeks or Romans, because requiring less artifice in its construction. But I deny the fact, and am ready to depose on oath, that I find every syllable as distinguishably and clearly, either long or short, in our language, as in any other. I know also, that without an attention to the quantity of our syllables, good verse cannot possibly be written, and that ignorance of this matter is one reason, why we see so much, that is good for nothing. The movement of a verse is always either shuffling or graceful, according, to our management in this particular, and Milton gives almost as many proofs of it in his Paradise Lost as there are lines in the poem. Away, therefore, with all such

unfounded observations! I would not give a farthing for many bushels of them——nor you perhaps for this letter. Yet, upon recollection, forasmuch as I know you to be a dear lover of literary gossip, I think it possible, you may esteem it highly.

Believe me, my dear friend, most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXX.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esqr.

Weston, Jan. 21, 1791.

I know, that you have already been catechized by Lady Hesketh on the subject of your return hither, before the winter shall be over, and shall therefore only say, that, if you CAN COME, we shall be happy to receive you. Remember also, that nothing can excuse the non-performance of a promise, but absolute necessity? In the mean time, my faith in your veracity is such, that I am persuaded you will suffer nothing less than necessity to prevent it. Were you not extremely pleasant to us, and just

the sort of youth, that suits us, we should neither of us have said half so much, or perhaps a word on the subject.

Yours, my dear Johnny, are vagaries that I shall never see practised by any other, and, whether you slap your ancle, or reel as if you were fuddled, or dance in the path before me, all is characteristic of yourself, and therefore to me delightful. I have hinted to you indeed sometimes, that you should be cautious of indulging antic habits and singularities of all sorts, and young men in general have need enough of such admonition. But yours are a sort of fairy habits, such as might belong to Puck or Robin Goodfellow, and therefore, good as the advice is, I should be half sorry should you take it.

This allowance at least I give you. Continue to take your walks, if walks they may be called, exactly in their present fashion, till you have taken orders! Then indeed, forasmuch as a skipping, curvetting, bounding divine might be a spectacle not altogether seemly, I shall consent to your adoption of a more grave demeanor.

W. C.

LETTER CXXI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Feb. 5, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My letters to you are all either petitionary, or in the style of acknowledgments and thanks, and such nearly in an alternate order. In my last, I loaded you with commissions, for the due discharge of which I am now to say, and say truly, how much I feel myself obliged to you; neither can I stop there, but must thank you likewise for new honors from Scotland, which have left me nothing to wish for from that country; for my list is now, I believe, graced with the subscription of all its learned bodies. I regret only that some of them arrived too late to do honor to my present publication of names. But there are those among them, and from Scotland too, that may give an useful hint perhaps to our own universities. Your very handsome present of Pope's Homer has arrived safe, notwithstanding an accident, that befel him by the way. The Hall-servant brought the parcel from Olney, resting it on the pommel of the saddle, and his horse

fell with him. Pope was in consequence rolled in the dirt, but, being well coated, got no damage. If augurs and soothsayers were not out of fashion, I should have consulted one or two of that order, in hope of learning from them, that this fall was ominous. I have found a place for him in the parlour, where he makes a splendid appearance, and where he shall not long want a neighbour, one, who, if less popular than himself, shall at least look as big as he. How has it happened, that since, Pope did certainly dedicate both Iliad and Odyssey, no dedication is found in this first edition of them!

W. C.

LETTER CXXII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Feb. 13, 1791.

I now send you a full and true account of this business. Having learned, that your inn at Woburn was the George, we sent Samuel

thither yesterday. Mr. Martin, master of the George, told him * * * * *

* * * * * *†

W. C.

P. S. I cannot help adding a circumstance that will divert you. Martin, having learned from Sam whose servant he was, told him, that he had never seen Mr. Cowper, but he had heard him frequently spoken of by the companies that had called at his house, and therefore when Sam would have paid for his breakfast, would take nothing from him. Who says, that fame is only empty breath? On the contrary, it is good ale, and cold beef into the bargain.

† *NOTE BY THE EDITOR.*

This letter contained the history of a servant's cruelty to a post-horse, which a reader of humanity could not wish to see in print.——But the postscript describes so pleasantly the signal influence of a poet's reputation on the spirit of a liberal inn-keeper, that it surely ought not to be suppress.

LETTER CXXIII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Feb. 26, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a maxim of much weight,
Worth conning o'er and o'er,
He, who has Homer to translate,
Had need do nothing more.

But notwithstanding the truth and importance of this apothegm, to which I lay claim as the original author of it, it is not equally true, that my application to Homer, close as it is, has been the sole cause of its delay to answer you. No. In observing so long a silence I have been influenced much more by a vindictive purpose, a purpose to punish you for your suspicion, that I could possibly feel myself hurt or offended by any critical suggestion of yours, that seemed to reflect on the purity of my nonsense verses. Understand, if you please, for the future, that, whether I disport myself in Greek or Latin, or in whatsoever other language, you are hereby, henceforth, and for ever, entitled and warranted to take any liber-

ties with it, to which you shall feel yourself inclined, not excepting even the lines themselves, which stand at the head of this letter!

You delight me when you call *blank* verse the English *heroic;* for I have always thought, and often said, that we have no other verse worthy to be so entitled. When you read my Preface you will be made acquainted with my sentiments on this subject pretty much at large, for which reason I will curb my zeal, and say the less about it at present. That Johnson, who wrote harmoniously in rhyme, should have had so defective an ear as never to have discovered any music at all in blank verse, till he heard a particular friend of his reading it, is a wonder never sufficiently to be wondered at. Yet this is true on his own acknowledgment, and amounts to a plain confession (of which perhaps he was not aware when he made it,) that he did not know how to read blank verse himself. In short, he either suffered prejudice to lead him in a string whithersoever it would, or his taste in poetry was worth little. I dont believe he ever read any thing of that kind with enthusiasm in his life; and as good poetry cannot be composed without a considerable share of that quality in the mind of the

author, so neither can it be read or tasted as it ought to be without it.

I have said all this in the morning fasting, but am soon going to my tea. When therefore I shall have told you that we are now in the course of our printing, in the second book of the Odyssey, I shall only have time to add, that

I am, my dear friend,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

I think your Latin quotations very applicable to the present state of France. But France is in a situation new and untried before.

LETTER CXXIV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Feb. 27, 1791.

Now, my dearest Johnny, I must tell thee in a few words how much I love and am obliged to thee for thy affectionate services.

My Cambridge honors are all to be ascribed to you, and to you only. Yet you are but a little man, and a little man into the bargain, who have kicked the mathematics, their idol, out of your study. So important are the endings, which Providence frequently connects with small beginnings. Had you been here, I could have furnished you with much employment; for I have so dealt with your fair MSS. in the course of my polishing and improving, that I have almost blotted out the whole. Such however as it is, I must now send it to the printer, and he must be content with it, for there is not time to make a fresh copy. We are now printing the second book of the Odyssey.

Should the Oxonians bestow none of their notice on me on this occasion, it will happen singu-

larly enough, that as Pope received all his university honors in the subscription way from Oxford, and none at all from Cambridge, so I shall have received all mine from Cambridge, and none from Oxford. This is the more likely to be the case, because I understand, that on whatsoever occasion either of those learned bodies thinks fit to move, the other always makes it a point to sit still, thus proving its superiority.

I shall send up your letter to Lady Hesketh, in a day or two, knowing that the intelligence contained in it, will afford her the greatest pleasure. Know, likewise, for your own gratification, that all the Scotch universities have subscribed, none excepted.

We are all as well as usual; that is to say, as well as reasonable folks expect to be on the crazy side of this frail existence.

I rejoice that we shall so soon have you again at our fire-side.

W. C.

LETTER CXXV.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

After all this ploughing and sowing on the plains of Troy, once fruitful, such at least to my translating predecessor, some harvest, I hope, will arise for me also. My long work has received its last, last touches; and I am now giving my Preface its final adjustment. We are in the fourth Odyssey in the course of our printing, and I expect that I and the swallows shall appear together. They have slept all the winter, but I, on the contrary have been extremely busy. Yet if I can "*virùm volitare per ora*," as swiftly as they through the air, I shall account myself well requited.

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CXXVI.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

March 10, 1791.

Give my affectionate remembrances to your Sisters, and tell them I am impatient to entertain them with my old story new dressed.

I have two French prints hanging in my study, both on Iliad subjects; and I have an English one in the parlour, on a subject from the same poem. In one of the former, Agamemnon dresses Achilles exactly in the attitude of a dancing-master turning miss in a minuet: in the latter, the figures are plain, and the attitudes plain also. This is, in some considerable measure, I believe, the difference between my translation and Pope's; and will serve as an exemplification of what I am going to lay before you and the public.

W. C.

LETTER CXXVII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, March 18, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I give you joy that you are about to receive some more of my elegant prose, and I feel myself in danger of attempting to make it even more elegant than usual, and thereby of spoiling it, under the influence of your commendations. But my old helter skelter manner has already succeeded so well, that I will not, even for the sake of entitling myself to a still greater portion of your praise, abandon it.

I did not call in question Johnson's true spirit of poetry, because he was not qualified to relish blank verse, (though, to tell you the truth, I think that but an ugly symptom) but if I did not express it, I meant however to infer it from the perverse judgment, that he has formed of our poets in general; depreciating some of the best, and making honorable mention of others, in my opinion, not undeservedly neglected. I will lay you sixpence, that, had he lived in the days of Milton, and by any accident had met with his Pa-

radise Lost, he would neither have directed the attention of others to it, nor have much admired it himself. Good-sense in short, and strength of intellect, seem to me, rather than a fine taste, to have been his distinguished characteristics. But should you still think otherwise, you have my free permission; for so long as you have yourself a taste for the beauties of Cowper, I care not a fig whether Johnson had a taste or not.

I wonder where you find all your quotations, pat as they are to the present condition of France. Do you make them yourself, or do you actually find them? I am apt to suspect sometimes that you impose them only on a poor man who has but twenty books in the world, and two of them are your Brother Chester's. They are, however, much to the purpose, be the author of them who he may.

I was very sorry to learn lately, that my friend at Chichely has been sometime indisposed, either with gout or rheumatism (for it seems to be uncertain which) and attended by Dr. Kerr. I am at a loss to conceive how so temperate a man should acquire the gout, and am resolved therefore to conclude, that it must be the rheumatism, which, bad as it is, is in my judgment the best of the two, and will afford me,

besides, some opportunity to sympathize with him, for I am not perfectly exempt from it myself. Distant as you are in situation, you are yet, perhaps, nearer to him in point of intelligence than I, and if you can send me any particular news of him, pray do it in your next.

I love and thank you for your benediction. If God forgive me my sins, surely I shall love him much, for I have much to be forgiven. But the quantum need not discourage me, since there is One whose atonement can suffice for all.

Τὲ δὲ καθ' ἅιμα ξέεν, καὶ σῦι, καὶ ἐμοῖ, καὶ' αδέλφοις
Ἡμετέροις, 'αυῖσ' ζωομένοις θανάτῳ.

Accept our joint remembrances, and believe me affectionately yours.

W. C.

LETTER CXXVIII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esqr.

Weston, March 19, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

You ask, if it may not be improper to solicit Lady Hesketh's subscription to the poems of the Norwich maiden? To which I reply, it will be by no means improper. On the contrary, I am persuaded, that she will give her name with a very good will: for she is much an admirer of poesy, that is worthy to be admired, and such I think, judging by the specimen, the poesy of this maiden, Elizabeth Bentley of Norwich, is likely to prove.

Not that I am myself inclined to expect in general great matters in the poetical way from persons whose ill-fortune it has been to want the common advantages of education: neither do I account it in general a kindness to such to encourage them in the indulgence of a propensity more likely to do them harm in the end, than to advance their interest. Many such phenomena have arisen within my remembrance, at which all the world has wondered for a season, and has then forgot them.

The fact is, that though strong natural genius is always accompanied with strong natural tendency to its object, yet it often happens that the tendency is found where the genius is wanting. In the present instance however (the poems of a certain Mrs. Leapor excepted, who published some forty years ago) I discern, I think, more marks of true poetical talent than I remember to have observed in the verses of any other male or female, so disadvantageously circumstanced. I wish her therefore good speed, and subscribe to her with all my heart.

You will rejoice when I tell you, that I have some hopes, after all, of a harvest from Oxford also; Mr. Throckmorton has written to a person of considerable influence there, which he has desired him to exert in my favor, and *his* request, I should imagine, will hardly prove a vain one.

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER CXXIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, March 24, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You apologize for your silence in a manner which affords me so much pleasure, that I cannot but be satisfied. Let business be the cause, and I am contented. That is a cause to which I would even be accessary myself, and would increase yours by any means, except by a law-suit of my own, at the expence of all your opportunities of writing oftener than thrice in a twelve-month.

Your application to Dr. Dunbar reminds me of two lines to be found somewhere in Dr. Young.

"And now a poet's gratitude you see,
"Grant him two favours, and he'll ask for three."

In this particular, therefore, I perceive, that a poet, and a poet's friend, bear a striking resemblance to each other. The Doctor will bless himself, that the number of Scotch universities is not larger, assured that if they equalled those in England in number of colleges, you would give him no rest till he had en-

gaged them all. It is true, as Lady Hesketh told you, that I shall not fear in the matter of subscriptions, a comparison even with Pope himself; considering (I mean) that we live in days of terrible taxation, and when verse, not being a necessary of life, is accounted dear, be it what it may, even at the lowest price. I am no very good arithmetician, yet I calculated the other day in my morning walk, that my two volumes, at the price of three guineas, will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them, that have cost me the labour of hours, and none, that have not cost me some labour.

W. C.

LETTER CXXX.

To Lady HESKETH.

Friday-night, March 25, 1791.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Johnson writes me word, that he has repeatedly called on Horace Walpole, and has

never found him at home. He has also written to him, and received no answer. I charge thee therefore on thy allegiance, that thou move not a finger more in this business. My back is up, and I cannot bear the thought of wooing him any farther, nor would do it, though he were as *pig* a gentlemen (look you!) as Lucifer himself. I have Welch blood in me, if the pedigree of the Donnes say true, and every drop of it says—"Let him alone!"

I should have dined at the Hall to day, having engaged myself to do so: but an untoward occurrence, that happened last night, or rather this morning, prevented me. It was a thundering rap at the door, just after the clock struck three. First, I thought the house was on fire. Then I thought the Hall was on fire. Then I thought it was a housebreaker's trick. Then I thought it was an express. In any case I thought, that if it should be repeated, it would awaken and terrify Mrs. Unwin, and kill her with spasms. The consequence of all these thoughts was the worst nervous fever I ever had in my life, although it was the shortest. The rap was given but once, though a multifarious one. Had I heard a second, I should have risen myself at all adventures. It was the only minute since you went, in which I

have been glad that you were not here. Soon after I came down, I learned, that a drunken party had passed through the village at that time, and they were, no doubt, the authors of this witty, but troublesome invention.

Our thanks are due to you for the book you sent us. Mrs. Unwin has read to me several parts of it, which I have much admired. The observations are shrewd and pointed; and there is much wit in the similes and illustrations. Yet a remark struck me, which I could not help making *vivâ voce* on the occasion. If the book has any real value, and does in truth deserve the notice taken of it by those, to whom it is addressed, its claim is founded neither on the expression, nor on the style, nor on the wit of it, but altogether on the truth that it contains. Now the same truths are delivered, to my knowledge, perpetually from the pulpit by ministers, whom the admirers of this writer would disdain to hear. Yet the truth is not the less important for not being accompanied and recommended by brilliant thoughts and expressions; neither is God, from whom comes all truth, any more a respecter of wit than he is of persons. It will appear soon whether they applaud the book for the sake of its unanswerable arguments, or only

tolerate the argument for the sake of the splendid manner in which it is enforced. I wish as heartily that it may do them good, as if I were myself the author of it. But, alas! my wishes and hopes are much at variance. It will be the talk of the day, as another publication of the same kind has been; and then the noise of vanity-fair will drown the voice of the preacher.

I am glad to learn that the Chancellor does not forget me, though more for his sake than my own: for I see not, how he can ever serve a man like me.

Adieu, my dearest Coz.

W. C.

LETTER CXXXI.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON.

April 1, 1791.

MY DEAR MRS. FROG.

A word or two before breakfast; which is all that I shall have time to send you!——You have not, I hope, forgot to,

tell Mr. Frog, how much I am obliged to him for his kind, though unsuccessful, attempt in my favor at Oxford. It seems not a little extraordinary, that persons so nobly patronized themselves, on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

> Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
> And tune his harp at Rhodicina's door,
> The rich old vixen would exclaim (I fear)
> "Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

I have read your husband's pamphlet through and through. You may think, perhaps, and so may he, that a question so remote from all concern of mine, could not interest me; but if you think so, you are both mistaken. He can write nothing that will not interest me; in the first place for the writer's sake, and in the next place, because he writes better and reasons better than any body, with more candor, and with more sufficiency; and, consequently, with more satisfaction to all his readers, save only his opponents. They, I think, by this time wish that they had let him alone.

Tom is delighted past measure with his wooden nag, and gallops at a rate that would kill any horse that had a life to lose.

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CXXXII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, April 6, 1791.

MY DEAR JOHNNY,

A thousand thanks for your splendid assemblage of Cambridge luminaries! If you are not contented with your collection, it can only be because you are unreasonable; for I, who may be supposed more covetous on this occasion than any body, am highly satisfied, and even delighted with it. If indeed you should find it practicable to add still to the number, I have not the least objection. But this charge I give you.

Αλλο δε τοι ερεω, συ δ' ενι Φρεσι βαλλεο σησι

Stay not an hour beyond the time you have mentioned, even though you should be able to add a thousand names by so doing? For I cannot afford to purchase them at that cost. I long to see you, and so do we both, and will not suffer you to postpone your visit for any such consideration. No, my dear boy! In the affair of subscriptions we are already illustrious enough, shall be so at least, when you shall have enlisted a college or two more; which, perhaps, you may be able to do in the course of the ensuing week. I feel myself much obliged to your university, and much disposed to admire the liberality of spirit they have shewn on this occasion. Certainly I had not deserved much favor of their hands, all things considered. But the cause of literature seems to have some weight with them, and to have superseded the resentment they might be supposed to entertain on the score of certain censures, that you wot of. It is not so at Oxford.

W. C.

LETTER CXXXIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

April 29, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I forgot if I told you that Mr. Throckmorton had applied through the medium of —— to the university of Oxford. He did so, but without success. Their answer was, "that they subscribe to nothing."

Pope's subscriptions did not amount, I think, to six hundred; and mine will not fall very short of five. Noble doings, at a time of day when Homer has no news to tell us, and when all other comforts of life having arisen in price, poetry has of course fallen. I call it a "comfort of life:" it is so to others, but to myself, it is become even a necessary.

These holiday times are very unfavorable to the printer's progress. He and all his demons are making themselves merry, and me sad, for I mourn at every hindrance.

W. C.

LETTER CXXXIV.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, May 2, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Monday being a day in which Homer has now no demands upon me, I shall give part of the present Monday to you. But it this moment occurs to me that the proposition with which I begin will be obscure to you, unless followed by an explanation. You are to understand, therefore, that Monday being no post-day, I have consequently no proof-sheets to correct, the correction of which is nearly all that I have to do with Homer at present; I say nearly all, because I am likewise occasionally employed in reading over the whole of what is already printed, that I may make a table of errata to each of the poems. How much is already printed say you? —I answer—the whole Iliad, and almost seventeen books of the Odyssey.

About a fortnight since, perhaps three weeks, I had a visit from your nephew, Mr. Bagot, and his tutor, Mr. Hurlock, who came hither under conduct of your niece, Miss Barbara. So were the friends of

Ulysses conducted to the palace of Antiphates, the Lœstrigonian, by that monarch's daughter. But mine is no palace, neither am I a giant, neither did I devour any one of the party—on the contrary, I gave them chocolate, and permitted them to depart in peace. I was much pleased both with the young man and his tutor. In the countenance of the former I saw much Bagotism, and not less in his manners. I will leave you to guess what I mean by that expression. Physiognomy is a study of which I have almost as high an opinion as Lavater himself, the professor of it, and for this good reason, because it never yet deceived me. But perhaps I shall speak more truly if I say, that I am somewhat of an adept in the art, although I have *never studied* it; for whether I will or not, I judge of every human creature by the countenance, and, as I say, have never yet seen reason to repent of my judgment. Sometimes I feel myself powerfully attracted as I was by your Nephew, and sometimes with equal vehemence repulsed, which attraction and repulsion have always been justified in the sequel.

I have lately read, and with more attention than I ever gave to them before, Milton's Latin poems. But these I must make the subject of some

future letter, in which it will be ten to one that your friend Samuel Johnson gets another slap or two at the hands of your humble servant. Pray read them yourself, and with as much attention as I did; then read the Doctor's remarks if you have them, and then tell me what you think of both. It will be pretty sport for you on such a day as this, which is the fourth that we have had of almost incessant rain. The weather, and a cold, the effect of it, have confined me ever since last Thursday. Mrs. Unwin however is well, and joins me in every good wish to yourself and family. I am, my good friend,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXXXV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 18, 1791.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Has another of thy letters fallen short of its destination; or wherefore is it, that

thou writest not? One letter in five weeks is a poor allowance for your friends at Weston. One, that I received two or three days since from Mrs. Frog, has not at all enlightened me on this head. But I wander in a wilderness of vain conjecture.

I have had a letter lately from New York, from a Dr. Cogswell of that place, to thank me for my fine verses, and to tell me, which pleased me particularly, that after having read the Task, my first volume fell into his hands, which he read also, and was equally pleased with. This is the only instance I can recollect of a reader who has done justice to my first effusions: for I am sure, that in point of expression, they do not fall a jot below my second, and that in point of subject, they are for the most part superior. But enough, and too much of this. The Task he tells me has been reprinted in that city.

Adieu! my dearest coz.

We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, and with icy blasts to fan them.

Ever thine,

W. C.

LETTER CXXXVI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, May 23, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Did I not know that you are never more in your element than when you are exerting yourself in my cause, I should congratulate you on the hope, there seems to be, that your labour will soon have an end.

You will wonder, perhaps, my Johnny, that Mrs. Unwin by my desire, enjoined you to secrecy concerning the translation of the Frogs and Mice. Wonderful it may well seem to you, that I should wish to hide for a short time from a few, what I am just going to publish to all. But I had more reasons than one for this mysterious management; that is to say, I had two. In the first place, I wished to surprize my readers agreeably; and secondly, I wished to allow none of my friends an opportunity to object to the measure, who might think it perhaps a measure more bountiful than prudent. But I have had my sufficient reward though not a pecuniary one. It is a poem of

much humour, and accordingly I found the translation of it very amusing. It struck me too, that I must either make it part of the present publication, or never publish it all; it would have been so terribly out of its place in any other volume.

I long for the time that shall bring you once more to Weston, and all your *et ceteras* with you. Oh! what a month of May has this been! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praises of May again.

W. C.

THE

JUDGMENT of the POETS.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanc'd to wage,
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
Had both alike been mild;
But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frown'd oft'ner than she smil'd.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,
Would raise her voice and roar;
And shake with fury to the ground,
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear;
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never prov'd severe.

To poets of renown in song,
The nymphs refer'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell! all judg'd it wrong,
And gave misplac'd applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind, and soft,
The flippant, and the scold;
And though she chang'd her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges sure were e'er so mad,
Or so resolv'd to err;
In short, the charms her sister had,
They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the God, whom fondly they,
Their great inspirer call,
Was heard one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all.

" Since thus ye have combin'd," he said,
" My fav'rite nymph to slight,
" Adorning May, that peevish maid!
" With June's undoubted right;

" The minx shall for your folly's sake,
" Still prove herself a shrew:
" Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
" And pinch your noses blue."

LETTER CXXXVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 27, 1791.

MY DEAREST COZ.

I, who am neither dead, nor sick, nor idle, should have no excuse, were I as tardy in answering, as you in writing. I live indeed where leisure abounds, and you, where leisure is not; a difference that accounts sufficiently both for your silence and my loquacity.

When you told Mrs. ——, that my Homer would come forth in May, you told her what you believed, and therefore no falsehood. But you told her at the

same time what will not happen, and therefore not a truth. There is a medium between truth and falsehood; and (I believe) the word mistake, expresses it exactly. I will therefore say, that you were mistaken. If instead of May you had mentioned June, I flatter myself that you would have hit the mark. For in June there is every probability that we shall publish. You will say, "hang the printer!—for it is his fault!" But stay my dear, hang him not just now! For to execute him, and find another, will cost us time, and so much too, that I question, if in that case, we should publish sooner than in August. To say truth, I am not perfectly sure that there will be any necessity to hang him at all! though that is a matter which I desire to leave entirely at your discretion, alledging only in the mean time, that the man does not appear to me during the last half-year to have been at all in fault. His remittance of sheets in all that time has been punctual, save and except, while the Easter holidays lasted, when (I suppose) he found it impossible to keep his devils to their business. I shall however receive the last sheet of the Odyssey to-morrow, and have already sent up the Preface, together with all the needful. You see therefore, that the publication of this famous work cannot be delayed much longer.

As for politics, I reck not, having no room in my head for any thing but the Slave-bill. That is lost; and all the rest is a trifle. I have not seen Payne's book, but refused to see it, when it was offered to me. No man shall convince me that I am improperly governed while I feel the contrary.

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, June 15, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If it will afford you any comfort that you have a share in my affections, of that comfort you may avail yourself at all times. You have acquired it by means which, unless I should become worthless myself, to an uncommon degree, will always secure you from the loss of it. You are learning what all learn, though few at so early an age, that man is an ungrateful animal; and that benefits too often, instead of securing a due return, operate

rather as provocations to ill treatment. This I take to be the *summum malum* of the human heart. Towards God we are all guilty of it more or less; but between man and man, we may thank God for it, there are some exceptions. He leaves this peccant principle to operate, in some degree against himself, in all, for our humiliation, I suppose; and because the pernicious effects of it in reality cannot injure him, he cannot suffer by them; but he knows, that unless he should restrain its influence on the dealings of mankind with each other, the bonds of society would be dissolved, and all charitable intercourse at an end amongst us. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, "Do him an ill-turn, and you make him your *friend* for ever;" of others it may be said, "Do them a good one, and they will be for ever your *enemies*." It is the Grace of God only, that makes the difference.

The absence of Homer, (for we have now shaken hands and parted) is well supplied by three relations of mine from Norfolk. My Cousin Johnson, an Aunt of his, and his Sister. I love them all dearly, and am well contented to resign to them the place in my attentions, so lately occupied by the chiefs of Greece and Troy. His Aunt and I have spent many a merry day together, when we were some forty

years younger; and we make shift to be merry togegether still. His Sister is a sweet young woman, graceful, good natured, and gentle, just what I had imagined her to be before I had seen her.

Farewell,

W. C.

LETTER CXXXIX.

To Dr. JAMES COGSWELL, New-York.

Weston-Underwood, near Olney, Bucks,
June 15, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter and obliging present from so great a distance deserved a speedier acknowledgment, and should not have wanted one so long, had not circumstances so fallen out since I received them as to make it impossible for me to write sooner. It is indeed but within this day or two that I have heard how, by the help of my bookseller, I may transmit an answer to you.

My title-page, as it well might, misled you. It speaks me of the Inner-Temple, and so I am, but a

member of that society only, not as an inhabitant. I live here almost at the distance of sixty miles from London, which I have not visited these eight and twenty years, and probably never shall again. Thus it fell out, that Mr. Morewood had sailed again for America before your parcel reached me, nor should I (it is likely) have received it at all, had not a Cousin of mine, who lives in the Temple, by good fortune received it first, and opened your letter; finding for whom it was intended, he transmitted to me both that and the parcel. Your testimony of approbation of what I have published, coming from another quarter of the globe, could not but be extremely flattering, as was your obliging notice that the Task had been reprinted in your city. Both volumes, I hope, have a tendency to discountenance vice, and promote the best interests of mankind. But how far they shall be effectual to these invaluable purposes, depends altogether on his blessing, whose truths I have endeavoured to inculcate. In the mean time I have sufficient proof, that readers may be pleased, may approve, and yet lay down the book unedified.

During the last five years I have been occupied with a work of a very different nature, a Translation of the Iliad and Odyssey into blank verse, and the

work is now ready for publication. I undertook it, partly because Pope's is too lax a version, which has lately occasioned the learned of this country to call aloud for a new one, and partly because I could fall on no better expedient to amuse a mind too much addicted to melancholy.

I send you in return for the volumes with which you favored me, three on religious subjects, popular productions that have not been long published, and that may not therefore yet have reached your country; The Christian Officer's Panoply, by a marine officer—The Importance of the Manners of the Great, and an Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. The two last are said to be written by a lady, Miss Hannah Moore, and are universally read by people of that rank to which she addresses them. Your manners, I suppose, may be more pure than ours, yet it is not unlikely, that even among you may be found some to whom her strictures are applicable. I return you my thanks, Sir, for the volumes you sent me, two of which I have read with pleasure, Mr. Edwards's book, and the Conquest of Canaan. The rest I have not had time to read, except Doctor Dwight's Sermon, which pleased me almost more than any that I have either seen or heard.

I shall account a correspondence with you an honour, and remain, dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

W. C.

The occurrences related in the series of letters, that I have just imparted to my reader, have now brought me to the close of the second period in my Work. As I contemplated the life of my friend, it seemed to display itself in three obvious divisions; the first ending with the remarkable æra when he burst forth on the world as a poet, in his fiftieth year; on which occasion we may apply to him the lively compliment of Waller to Denham, and say, with superior truth—"He burst out like the Irish rebellion, "three-score thousand strong, when nobody was "aware, or in the least suspected it." The second division may conclude with the publication of his Homer; comprising the incidents of ten splendid and fruitful years, that may be regarded as the meridian of his poetical career. The subsequent period extends to that awful event which terminates every labour of the poet and the man.

We have seen in many of the preceding letters, with what ardour of application and liveliness of hope, he devoted himself to his favorite project of enriching the literature of his country with an English Homer, that might be justly esteemed as a faithful, yet free translation; a genuine and graceful representative of the justly idolized original.

After five years of intense and affectionate labour, in which nothing could withhold him from his interesting work, except that oppressive and cruel malady, which suspended his powers of application for several months, he published his complete version in two quarto volumes, on the first of July 1791, having inscribed the Iliad to his young noble kinsman, Earl Cowper; and the Odyssey to the dowager Countess Spencer; a lady, for whose virtues he had long entertained a most cordial and affectionate veneration.

The accomplished translator had exerted no common powers of genius and of industry to satisfy both himself and the world; yet in his first edition of this long laboured work, he afforded complete satisfaction to neither, and I believe for this reason.—Homer is so exquisitely beautiful in his own language, and he has been so long an idol in every literary mind,

that any copy of him, which the best of modern poets can execute, must probably resemble in its effect the portrait of a graceful woman, painted by an excellent artist for her lover:—The lover indeed, will acknowledge great merit in the work, and think himself much indebted to the skill of such an artist, but he will never acknowledge, as in truth he never can feel, that the best of resemblances exhibits all the grace that he discerns in the beloved original.

So fares it with the admirers of Homer; his very translators themselves feel so perfectly the power of this predominant affection, and they gradually grow discontented with their own labour, however approved in the moment of its supposed completion. This was so remarkably the case with Cowper, that in process of time we shall see him employed upon what may almost be called his second translation; so great were the alterations he made in a deliberate revisal of his work for a second edition. And in the Preface which he prepared for that edition, he has spoken of his own labour with the most frank and ingenuous veracity. Yet of the first edition it may, I think, be fairly said, that it accomplished more than any of his poetical predecessors had achieved before him. It made the nearest approach to that sweet majestic sim-

plicity which forms one of the most attractive features in the great prince and father of poets.

Cowper in reading Pope's Homer to Lady Austen and Mrs. Unwin, had frequently expressed a wish, and an expectation, of seeing the simplicity of the ancient bard more faithfully preserved in a new English version. Lady Austen, with a kind severity, reproved him for expecting from others what he, of all men living, was best qualified to accomplish himself; and her solicitations on the subject excited him to the arduous undertaking; though it seems not to have been actually begun till after her departure from Olney.

If he was not at first completely successful in this long and mighty work, the continual and voluntary application with which he pursued it, was to himself a blessing of the utmost importance.

In those admirable admonitions to men of a poetical temperament, with which Dr. Currie has closed his instructive and pleasing Life of Burns, that accomplished physician has justly pointed to a regular and constant occupation, as the true remedy for an inordinate sensibility, which may prove so perilous an enemy to the peace and happiness of a poet. His remark appears to be particularly verified in the striking

and I may say, medicinal influence, which a daily attachment of his thoughts to Homer produced, for a long time, on the tender spirits of my friend; an influence sufficiently proved by his frequent declarations, that he should be sorry to find himself at the end of his labour. The work was certainly beneficial to his health; it contributed a little to his fortune; and ultimately, I am persuaded, it will redound to his fame in a much higher degree than it has hitherto done. Time will probably prove, that if it is not a perfect representation of Homer, it is at least such a copy of the matchless original, as no modern writer can surpass in the two essential articles of fidelity and freedom.

I must not omit to observe one more advantage which Cowper derived from this extensive labour, for it is an advantage which reflects great honor on his sensibility as a man. I mean a constant flow of affectionate pleasure that he felt in the many kind offices which he received from several friends in the course of this laborious occupation.

I cannot more clearly illustrate his feelings on this subject, than by introducing a passage from one of his letters to his most assiduous and affectionate amanuensis, his young kinsman of Norfolk!——It breathes all the tender moral spirit of Cowper, and

shall therefore close the second division of my Work.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, June 1, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Now you may rest—Now I can give you joy of the period of which I gave you hope in my last: the period of all your labours in my service.—But this I can foretell you also, that if you persevere in serving your friends at this rate, your life is likely to be a life of labour:—Yet persevere! your rest will be the sweeter hereafter! In the mean time I wish you, if at any time you should find occasion for him, just such a friend as you have proved to me!

W. C.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE

LIFE OF COWPER.

PART THE THIRD.

Οἱ ἀρετῆς ἐφιέμενοι πάντες ἔτι καὶ νῦν διατελοῦσι πάντων μάλιστα ποθοῦντες ἐκεῖνον, ὡς ὠφελιμωτάτου ὄντος πρὸς ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν.

XENOPHON.

THE active and powerful mind of Cowper wanted no long interval of rest after finishing the work of five laborious years. On the contrary, he very soon began to feel that regular hours of mental exertion were essentially requisite to his comfort and welfare.

That extraordinary proficient in the knowledge of human nature, Lord Bacon, has inserted in his list of articles conducive to health (for his own use) one article, that may appear, at first sight, little suited to such a purpose—"heroic desires!" If we under-

stand by this expression, what he probably intended, a constant inclination and care to employ our faculties fervently and steadily on some grand object of laudable pursuit, perhaps the whole *Materia Medica* could have furnished him with nothing so likely to promote the preservation of health; especially in a frame distinguished by nerves of the most delicate and dangerous sensibility.

Cowper was himself aware of this truth and he was looking deliberately around him for some new literary object of magnitude and importance, when his thoughts were directed to Milton, by an unexpected application from the literary merchant with whom he had corresponded, occasionally, for some years; and with whom his acquaintance, though confined to letters of business, had ripened into a cordial esteem.

The great author of the Rambler (intimately acquainted with all the troubles, that are too apt to attend the votaries of literature) has said, "That a bookseller is the only Mecænas of the modern world." Without assenting to all the eulogy, and all the satire implied in this remarkable sentiment, we may take a pleasure in observing, that in the class of men so magnificently and sportively commended, there are seve-

ral individuals, each of whom a writer of the most delicate manners and exalted mind, may justly esteem as a pleasing associate, and as a liberal friend.

In this light Cowper regarded his bookseller, Mr. Johnson, to whom he had literally given the two volumes of his Poems, with that modest and generous simplicity of spirit, which formed a striking part of his character. He entertained no presumptuous ideas of their pecuniary value; and when the just applause of the world had sufficiently proved it, he nobly declined the idea of resuming a gift, which the probity of his merchant would have allowed him to recall. He was however so pleased by this, and by subsequent proofs of liberality in the conduct of Mr. Johnson, that on being solicited by him to embark in the adventure of preparing a magnificent edition of Milton, he readily entered into the project, and began his admirable Translations from the Latin and Italian poetry of that illustrious author.

As it is to Milton that I am in a great measure indebted for what I must ever regard as a signal blessing, the friendship of Cowper! The reader will pardon me for dwelling a little on the circumstances that produced it: circumstances which often lead me to

repeat those sweet verses of my friend, on the casual origin of our most valuable attachments.

> Mysterious are his ways, whose power
> Brings forth that unexpected hour,
> When minds that never met before,
> Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
> It is th' allotment of the skies,
> The hand of the Supremely Wise,
> That guides and governs our affections,
> And plans and orders our connections.

These charming verses strike with peculiar force on my heart, when I recollect, that it was an idle endeavour to make us enemies, which gave rise to our intimacy, and that I was providentially conducted to Weston at a season when my presence there afforded peculiar comfort to my affectionate friend, under the pressure of a domestic affliction, which threatened to overwhelm his very tender spirits.

The entreaty of many persons, whom I wished to oblige, had engaged me to write a Life of Milton, before I had the slightest suspicion that my work could interfere with the projects of any man; but I was soon surprised and concerned in hearing that I was represented in a news-paper, as an antagonist of Cowper.

I immediately wrote to him on the subject, and our correspondence soon endeared us to each other in no common degree. The series of his letters to me I value not only as memorials of a most dear and honorable friendship, but as exquisite examples of epistolary excellence. My pride might assuredly be gratified by inserting them all, as I have been requested to do in this publication; but, I trust, I am influenced by a proper sense of duty towards my departed friend in with-holding many of them, at present, from the eye of the public. The truth is, I feel that the extreme sensibility of my affectionate correspondent, led him, very frequently, to speak of me in such terms of tender partiality, that the world must not be expected to forgive him for so over-rating even the merit of a friend, till that friend is sharing with him the hallowed rest of the grave. In the mean time my readers, I hope, will approve my confining myself to such a selection from them, as appears to me necessary for the completion of this narrative; which I seize every opportunity of embellishing with numerous letters to his other correspondents.

It is time to resume the series of such letters, and in doing so I embrace with a melancholy gratification, an opportunity of paying tender respect to the

memory of a scholar and a poet, who in 1791, solicited and obtained the regard of Cowper, and saw him for the first time at Eartham in the following year.—I speak of the late professor of poetry the reverend James Hurdis; a man whose death must be lamented as peculiarly unseasonable, did not piety suggest to the persons most deeply afflicted, by a loss so little expected, that it is irrational and irreligious to repine at those decrees of Heaven, which summon to early beatitude the most deserving of its servants. As this exemplary divine was tenderly idolized by several accomplished Sisters, it may be hoped that his collected works will be republished by some member of his family, with a memorial of the learned, elegant, and moral writer, adapted to the extent and variety of his merit. My intercourse with him was brief indeed, but terminated with expressions of kindness, when every kind syllable derives an affecting power from the approach of death. I had applied to him, requesting the sight of letters that I knew he had been long in the habit of receiving from Cowper: My application, to my surprise and concern, found him sinking into a fatal illness; but he kindly intimated to a beloved sister, a wish to comply with my request. To the fidelity of her affection

towards a deserving a brother, I am indebted for the papers which I wished to see, and from which I have made such a selection, as I deem most consistent with the regard I owe to both the departed poets. Their reciprocal esteem will reflect honor on both; and it is particularly pleasing to observe the candid and liberal spirit, with which Cowper attended to the wishes, and encouraged the exertions of a young and modest writer, who was justly ambitious of his applause.

The date of his first letter to the author of the Village Curate appears to claim an earlier place in this Work, but a variety of circumstances conspired to fix it here.

LETTER CXL.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

SIR,

I have always entertained, and have occasionally avowed, a great degree of respect for the abilities of the unknown author of the Village Curate, unknown at that time, but now well-known, and not to me only, but to many. For before I was favored with your obliging letter, I knew your name, your place of abode, your profession, and that you had four sisters; all which I neither learned from our bookseller, nor from any of his connexions; you will perceive therefore that you are no longer an author incognito. The writer indeed of many passages that have fallen from your pen could not long continue so. Let genius, true genius, conceal itself where it may, we may say of it, as the young man in Terence of his beautiful mistress, "*Diu latere non potuit.*"

I am obliged to you for your kind offers of service, and will not say that I shall not be troublesome to you hereafter; but at present I have no need

to be so. I have within these two days given the very last stroke of my pen to my long Translation, and what will be my next career I know not. At any rate we shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only, for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door however will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with my natural disposition to draw a circle round me which I cannot pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immoveable; in which case should you chuse at any time to move Weston-ward, you will always find me happy to receive you, and in the mean time I remain, with much respect,

Your most obedient servant, critic, and friend,

W. C.

P. S. I wish to know what you mean to do with Sir Thomas*. For though I expressed doubts about his theatrical possibilities, I think him a very respectable person, and with some improvement well worthy of being introduced to the public.

* Sir Thomas More, a Tragedy.

LETTER CXLI.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, June 13, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ought to have thanked you for your agreeable and entertaining letter much sooner, but I have many correspondents who will not be said, nay; and have been obliged of late to give my last attentions to Homer. The very last indeed, for yesterday I dispatched to town, after revising them carefully, the proof sheets of the subscribers' names, among which I took special notice of yours, and am much obliged to you for it. We have contrived, or rather my bookseller and printer have contrived (for they have never waited a moment for me) to publish as critically at the wrong time, as if my whole interest and success, had depended upon it. March, April, and May, said Johnson to me in a letter that I received from him in February, are the best months for publication. *Therefore* now it is determined that Homer shall come out on the first of July; that is to say, exactly at the moment when, except a few lawyers, not a creature will be left in town who will ever

care one farthing about him. To which of these two friends of mine I am indebted for this management, I know not. It does not please; but I would be a philosopher as well as a poet, and therefore make no complaint, or grumble at all about it. You, I presume, have had dealings with them both—how did they manage for you? And if as they have for me, how did you behave under it? Some who love me, complain that I am too passive; and I should be glad of an opportunity to justify myself by your example. The fact is, should I thunder ever so loud, no efforts of that sort will avail me now; therefore like a good economist of my bolts, I choose to reserve them for more profitable occasions.

I am glad to find that your amusements have been so similar to mine: for in this instance too I seemed in need of somebody so keep me in countenance, especially in my attention and attachment to animals. All the notice that we lords of the creation vouchsafe to bestow on the creatures, is generally to abuse them; it is well, therefore, that here and there a man should be found a little womanish, or perhaps a little childish in this matter, who will make some amends, by kissing and coaxing, and laying them in one's bosom.

You remember the little ewe lamb, mentioned by the prophet Nathan, the prophet perhaps invented the tale for the sake of its application to David's conscience; but it is more probable, that God inspired him with it for that purpose. If he did, it amounts to a proof, that he does not over-look, but on the contrary, much notices such little partialities and kindnesses to his *dumb* creatures, as we, because we articulate, are pleased to call them.

Your Sisters are fitter to judge than I, whether assembly rooms, are the places of all others, in which the ladies may be studied to most advantage. I am an old fellow, but I had once my dancing days, as you have now, yet I could never find that I learned half so much of a woman's real character by dancing with her, as by conversing with her at home, where I could observe her behaviour at the table, at the fire-side, and in all the trying circumstances of domestic life. We are all good when we are pleased, but she is the good woman who wants not a fiddle to sweeten her. If I am wrong, the young ladies will set me right; in the mean time I will not teaze you with graver arguments on the subject, especially as I have a hope, that years, and the study of the Scripture, and

His Spirit, whose word it is, will, in due time, bring you to my way of thinking. I am not one of those sages who require that young men should be as old as themselves before they have had time to be so.

With my love to your fair Sisters, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXLII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Aug. 2, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was much obliged, and still feel myself much obliged, to Lady Bagot for the visit with which she favored me. Had it been possible that I could have seen Lord Bagot too, I should have been completely happy. For, as it happened, I was that morning in better spirits than usual, and though I arrived late, and after a long walk, and extremely hot, which is a circumstance very apt to disconcert me, yet I was not disconcerted half so much as I ge-

nerally am at the sight of a stranger, especially of a stranger lady, and more especially at the sight of a stranger lady of quality. When the servant told me that Lady Bagot was in the parlour, I felt my spirits sink ten degrees, but the moment I saw her, at least when I had been a minute in her company, I felt them rise again, and they soon rose even above their former pitch. I know two ladies of fashion now whose manners have this effect upon me, The Lady in question, and the Lady Spencer. I am a shy animal, and want much kindness to make me easy. Such I shall be to my dying day.

Here sit *I*, calling myself *shy*, yet have just published by the *bye*, two great volumes of poe*try*.

This reminds me of Ranger's observation in the Suspicious Husband, who says to somebody, I forget whom—"*There is a degree of assurance in you* "*modest men that we impudent fellows can never ar-* "*rive at!*"—Assurance indeed! Have you seen 'em? What do you think they are? Nothing less I can tell you than a translation of Homer. Of the sublimest poet in the world. That's all. Can I ever have the impudence to call myself shy again?

You live, I think, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham? What must you not have felt on the

late alarming occasion! You I suppose could see the fires from your windows. We, who only heard the news of them have trembled. Never sure was religious zeal more terribly manifested, or more to the prejudice of its own cause.

Adieu, my dear friend, I am with Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXLIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Aug. 9, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I never make a correspondent wait for an answer through idleness, or want of proper respect for him; but if I am silent it is because I am busy, or not well, or because I stay till something occur that may make my letter at least a little better than mere blank paper. I therefore write speedily in reply to yours, being at present neither much occupied, nor at all indisposed, nor forbidden by a dearth of materials.

I wish always when I have a new piece in hand

to be as secret as you, and there was a time when I could be so. Then I lived the life of a solitary, was not visited by a single neighbour, because I had none with whom I could associate; nor ever had an inmate. This was when I dwelt at Olney; but since I have removed to Weston the case is different. Here I am visited by all around me, and study in a room exposed to all manner of inroads. It is on the ground floor, the room in which we dine, and in which I am sure to be found by all who seek me. They find me generally at my desk, and with my work whatever it be, before me, unless perhaps I have conjured it into its hiding place before they have had time to enter. This however is not always the case, and consequently, sooner or later, I cannot fail to be detected. Possibly you, who I suppose have a snug study, would find it impracticable to attend to any thing closely in an apartment exposed as mine, but use has made it familiar to me, and so familiar, that neither servants going and coming disconcert me; nor even if a lady, with an oblique glance of her eye, catches two or three lines of my MSS. do I feel myself inclined to blush, though naturally the shyest of mankind.

You did well, I believe, to cashier the subject of which you gave me a recital. It certainly wants

those *agremens*, which are necessary to the success of any subject in verse. It is a curious story, and so far as the poor young lady was concerned a very affecting one; but there is a coarseness in the character of the hero that would have spoiled all. In fact, I find it myself a much easier matter to write, than to get a convenient theme to write on.

I am obliged to you for comparing me as you go both with Pope and with Homer. It is impossible in any other way of management to know whether the Translation be well executed or not, and if well, in what degree. It was in the course of such a process that I first became dissatisfied with Pope. More than thirty years since, and when I was a young Templar, I accompanied him with his original, line by line, through both poems. A fellow student of mine, a person of fine classic taste, joined himself with me in the labour. We were neither of us, as you may imagine, very diligent in our proper business.

I shall be glad if my Reviewers, whosoever they may be, will be at the pains to read me as you do. I want no praise that I am not entitled to, but of that to which I am entitled, I should be loth to lose a tittle, having worked hard to earn it.

I would heartily second the Bishop of Salisbury in recommending to you a close pursuit of your Hebrew studies, were it not that I wish you to publish what I may understand. Do both, and I shall be satisfied.

Your remarks, if I may but receive them soon enough to serve me in case of a new edition, will be extremely welcome.

W. C.

LETTER CXLIV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, Aug. 9, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

The little that I have heard about Homer myself, has been equally, or more flattering than Dr. ——'s intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not studied the old Grecian, and how to dress him, so long, and so intensely, to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes, and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many diffe-

rent plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice, for other guide I have none, nor wish for another.

God bless you my dearest Johnny.

W. C.

LETTER CXLV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Sept. 14, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Whoever reviews me will in fact have a laborious task of it, in the performance of which he ought to move leisurely, and to exercise much critical discernment. In the mean time my courage is kept up by the arrival of such testimonies in my favor, as give me the greatest pleasure; coming from quarters the most respectable. I have reason, therefore to hope that our periodical judges will not be very averse to me, and that perhaps they may even favor me. If one man of taste and letters is

pleased, another man so qualified can hardly be displeased; and if the critics of a different description grumble, they will not however materially hurt me.

You, who know how necessary it is to me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement and that I have not refused it. A Milton that is to rival, and, if possible, to exceed in splendor, Boydell's Shakspeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in.

W. C.

LETTER CXLVI.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Sept. 21, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Of all the testimonies in favor of my Homer that I have received, none has given me so sincere a pleasure as that of Lord Bagot.

It is an unmixt pleasure, and without a drawback; because I know him to be perfectly, and in all respects, whether erudition, or a fine taste be in question, so well qualified to judge me, that I can neither expect nor wish a sentence more valuable than his——

——εἰσόκ' ἀὐτμή
Ἐν ςήθεσσι μένει, καί μοι φίλα γύνατ' ορώρει.

I hope by this time you have received your volumes, and are prepared to second the applauses of your Brother—else, woe be to you! I wrote to Johnson immediately on the receipt of your last, giving him a strict injunction to dispatch them to you without delay. He had sold some time since a hundred of the unsubscribed-for copies.

I have not a history in the world except Baker's Chronicle, and that I borrowed three years ago from Mr. Throckmorton. Now the case is this: I am translating Milton's third Elegy——his Elegy on the death of the Bishop of Winchester. He begins it with saying that while he was sitting alone, dejected, and musing on many melancholy themes; first, the idea of the Plague presented itself to his mind, and of the

havoc made by it among the great.——Then he proceeds thus:

Tum memini clarique ducis, fratrisque verendi
Intempestivis ossa cremata rogis:
Et memini Heroum, quos vidit ad æthera raptos,
Flevit et amissos Belgia tota duces.

I cannot learn from my only oracle, Baker, who this famous leader, and his reverend brother were. Neither does he at all ascertain for me the event alluded to in the second of these couplets. I am not yet possessed of Warton, who probably explains it, nor can be for a month to come. Consult him for me if you have him, or if you have him not, consult some other. Or you may find the intelligence perhaps in your own budget; no matter how you come by it, only send it to me if you can, and as soon as you can, for I ha : to leave unsolved difficulties behind me. In the first year of Charles the first, Milton was seventeen years of age, and then wrote this Elegy. The period therefore to which I would refer you, is the two or three last years of James the first.

Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER CXLVII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Oct. 25, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your unexpected and transient visit, like every thing else that is past, has now the appearance of a dream, but it was a pleasant one, and I heartily wish that such dreams could recur more frequently. Your Brother Chester repeated his visit yesterday, and I never saw him in better spirits. At such times he has, now and then, the very look that he had when he was a boy, and when I see it, I seem to be a boy myself, and entirely forget for a short moment the years that have intervened since I was one. The look, that I mean is one that you, I dare say, have observed.—Then we are at Westminster again. He left with me that poem of your brother Lord Bagot's, which was mentioned when you were here. It was a treat to me, and I read it to my Cousin Lady Hesketh and to Mrs. Unwin, to whom it was a treat also. It has great sweetness of numbers, and much elegance of expression, and is just such a poem as I should be happy to have composed myself about a year ago

when I was loudly called upon by a certain nobleman to celebrate the beauties of his villa. But I had two insurmountable difficulties to contend with. One was that I had never seen his villa, and the other, that I had no eyes at that time for any thing but Homer. Should I at any time hereafter undertake the task, I shall now at least know how to go about it, which, till I had seen Lord Bagot's poem, I verily did not. I was particularly charmed with the parody of those beautiful lines of Milton.

> "The song was partial, but the harmony——
> (What could it less, when spirits immortal sing?)
> Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience."

There's a parenthesis for you! The parenthesis it seems is out of fashion, and perhaps the moderns are in the right to proscribe what they cannot attain to. I will answer for it that had we the art at this day of insinuating a sentiment in this graceful manner, no reader of taste would quarrel with the practice. Lord Bagot showed his by selecting the passage for his imitation.

I would beat Warton if he were living, for supposing that Milton ever repented of his compliment o the memory of Bishop Andrews. I neither do,

nor can, nor will believe it. Milton's mind could not be narrowed by any thing, and though he quarrelled with episcopacy in the church of England idea of it, I am persuaded that a good bishop, as well as any other good man, of whatsoever rank or order, had always a share of his veneration.

Yours, my dear friend,

Very affectionately,

W. C.

LETTER CXLVIII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, Oct. 31, 1791.

MY DEAR JOHNNY,

Your kind and affectionate letter well deserves my thanks, and should have had them long ago, had I not been obliged lately to give my attention to a mountain of unanswered letters, which I have just now reduced to a mole-hill; yours lay at the bottom, and I have at last worked my way down to it.

It gives me great pleasure that you have found

a house to your minds. May you all three be happier in it than the happiest that ever occupied it before you! But my chief delight of all is to learn that you and Kitty are so completely cured of your long and threatening maladies. I always thought highly of Dr. Kerr, but his extraordinary success in your two instances has even inspired me with an affection for him.

My eyes are much better than when I wrote last, though seldom perfectly well many days together. At this season of the year I catch pepetual colds, and shall continue to do so till I have got the better of that tenderness of habit with which the summer never fails to affect me.

I am glad that you have heard well of my Work in your country. Sufficient proofs have reached me from various quarters that I have not ploughed the field of Troy in vain.

Were you here I would gratify you with an enumeration of particulars, but since you are not it must content you to be told that I have every reason to be satisfied.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, in her letter to Cousin Balls, made mention of my new engagement. I have

just entered on it, and therefore can at present say little about it.

It is a very creditable one in itself, and may I but acquit myself of it with sufficiency, it will do me honor. The commentator's part however is a new one to me, and one that I little thought to appear in.

Remember your promise that I shall see you in the spring.

The Hall has been full of company ever since you went, and at present my Catharina is there singing and playing like an angel.

W. C.

LETTER CXLIX.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Nov. 14, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have waited and wished for your opinion with the feelings that belong to the value I have for it, and am very happy to find it so favorable. In my table-drawer I treasure up a bundle of suffrages, sent me by those of whose approbation

I was most ambitious, and shall presently insert yours among them.

I know not why we should quarrel with compound epithets; it is certain, at least, they are as agreeable to the genius of our language as to that of the Greek, which is sufficiently proved by their being admitted into our common and colloquial dialect. Black-eyed, nut-brown, crook-shanked, hump-backed, are all compound epithets, and, together with a thousand other such, are used continually, even by those who profess a dislike to such combinations in poetry. Why then do they treat with so much familiarity, a thing that they say disgusts them? I doubt if they could give this question a reasonable answer; unless they should answer it by confessing themselves unreasonable.

I have made a considerable progress in the translation of Milton's Latin poems. I give them as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven, and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will altogether, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves,

and cannot fail to please, but by the fault of their translator.

W. C.

LETTER CXLX.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 5, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your last brought me two cordials; for what can better deserve that name than the cordial app.obation of two such readers, as your brother, the bishop, and your good friend and neighbour the clergyman? The former I have ever esteemed and honored with the justest cause, and am as ready to honor and esteem the latter as you can wish me to be, and as his wishes and talents deserve. Do I hate a parson? Heaven forbid! I love you all when you are good for any thing, and as to the rest, I would mend them if I could, and that is the worst of my intentions towards them.

I heard above a month since that this first edi-

tion of my work was at that time nearly sold. It will not therefore, I presume, be long before I must go to press again. This I mention merely from an earnest desire to avail myself of all other strictures that either your good neighbour, Lord Bagot, the bishop, or yourself,

πάντων ἐκπαγλότατ' ἀνδρῶν,

may happen to have made, and will be so good as to favor me with. Those of the good Evander contained in your last have served me well, and I have already in the three different places referred to, accommodated the text to them. And this I have done in one instance even a little against the bias of my own opinion.

- - - - - - - - - -ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὖθις ἕλωμαι
Ἐλθὼν σὺν πλεόνεσσι.

The sense I had given of these words is the sense in which an old scholiast has understood them, as appears in Clarke's note in loco. Clarke indeed prefers the other, but it does not appear plain to me that he does it with good reason against the judgment of a very ancient commentator, and a Grecian. And I am the

rather inclined to this persuasion because Achilles himself seems to have apprehended that Agamemnon would not content himself with Briseis only, when he says,

> But I have OTHER precious things on board,
> Of THESE take NONE away without my leave, &c.

it is certain that the words are ambiguous, and that the sense of them depends altogether on the punctuation. But I am always under the correction of so able a critic as your neighbour, and have altered, as I say, my version accordingly.

As to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have bargained with Johnson, and cannot recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian, part of another volume; for, with such an addition, I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose. This squabble, in the mean time, between Fuseli and Boydell does not interest me at all; let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job, and leave the event to be decided by the combatants.

> Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
> E terr ingentem alterius spectare laborem.

Adieu, my dear friend, I am most sincerely yours,

W. C.

Why should you suppose that I did not admire the poem you showed me? I did admire it, and told you so, but you carried it off in your pocket, and so doing, left me to forget it and without the means of enquiry.

I am thus nimble in answering, merely with a view to insure myself the receipt of other remarks in time for a new impression.

LETTER CXLXI.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Dec. 10, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find another

Homer, I shall promise (I believe) and vow, when I have done with Milton never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honourably employed whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis*, a pastoral in my judgment equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat!*

I was charmed with your friendly offer to be my advocate with the public; should I want one, I know not where I could find a better. The reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine grows more and more civil. Should he continue to sweeten at this rate, as he proceeds, I know not what will become of all the little modesty I have left. I have availed myself of some of his strictures, for I wish to learn from every body.

W. C.

LETTER CLII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

The Lodge, Dec. 21, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It grieves me, after having indulged a little hope that I might see you in the holidays, to be obliged to disappoint myself. The occasion too is such as will insure me your sympathy.

On Saturday last, while I was at my desk near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fire side opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!" I turned and saw her actually falling, together with her chair, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended too with some other very, very, alarming symptoms. At present, however, she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems in all respects better.

She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them as long as she wants them; which will probably be at

the best, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, over-set me completely: but at present I hold up bravely.

W. C.

LETTER CLIII.

To the Rev. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Feb. 14, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is the only advantage I believe that they who love each other derive from living at a distance, that the news of such ills as may happen to either seldom reaches the other till the cause of complaint is over. Had I been your next neighbour I should have suffered with you during the whole indisposition of your two children, and your own. As it is, I have nothing to do but to rejoice in your own recovery, and theirs, which I do sincerely, and wish only to learn from yourself that it is complete.

I thank you for suggesting the omission of the line due to the helmet of Achilles. How the omission happened I know not, whether by my fault or the printer's; it is certain however that I had translated it, and I have now given it its proper place.

I purpose to keep back a second edition till I have had an opportunity to avail myself of the remarks both of friends and strangers. The ordeal of criticism still awaits me in the reviews, and probably they will all in their turn mark many things that may be mended. By the Gentleman's Magazine I have already profited in several instances. My reviewer there, though favorable in the main, is a pretty close observer, and though not always right, is often so.

In the affair of Milton I will have no *horrida bella* if I can help it. It is at least my present purpose to avoid them if possible. For which reason, unless I should soon see occasion to alter my plan, I shall confine myself merely to the business of an annotator, which is my proper province, and shall sift out of Warton's notes every tittle that relates to the private character, political or religious principles of my author. These are properly subjects of a biographer's handling, but by no means, as it seems to me, for a commentator's.

In answer to your question if I have had a correspondence with the Chancellor—I reply—yes. We exchanged three or four letters on the subject of Homer, or rather on the subject of my Preface. He was doubtful whether or not my preference of blank-verse as affording opportunity for a closer version, was well founded. On this subject he wished to be convinced; defended rhyme with much learning, and much shrewd reasoning, but at last allowed me the honor of the victory, expressing himself in these words:—*I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best rendered in blank-verse, and you have succeeded in the passages that I have looked into.*

Thus it is when a wise man differs in opinion. Such a man will be candid, and conviction, not triumph, will be his object.

Adieu!——The hard name I gave you, I take to myself, and am your

ἀκραγλότατος

W. C.

LETTER CLIV.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Feb. 21, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

My obligations to you on the score of your kind and friendly remarks, demanded from me a much more expeditious acknowledgement of the numerous pacquets that contained them; but I have been hindered by many causes, each of which you would admit as a sufficient apology, but none of which I will mention, lest I should give too much of my paper to the subject. My acknowledgments are likewise due to your fair Sister, who has transcribed so many sheets in so neat a hand, and with so much accuracy.

At present I have no leisure for Homer, but shall certainly find leisure to examine him with a reference to your strictures, before I send him a second time to the printer. This I am at present unwilling to do, chusing rather to wait, if that may be, till I shall have undergone the discipline of all the reviewers; none of whom have yet taken me in hand, the Gentleman's Magazine excepted. By several of his

remarks I have benefited, and shall no doubt be benefited by the remarks of all.

Milton at present engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall then proceed immediately to deliberate upon, and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust at least that this anxiety will cease when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But after all, I seem to fear more the labour to which it calls me, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labours of versifying I have no objection, but to the labours of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so, with almost all the commentators that have ever existed.

I have expected, but not wondered, that I have not received Sir Thomas More, and the other mss. you promised me; because my silence has been such, considering how loudly I was called upon to write, that you must have concluded me either dead or dy-

ing, and did not chuse perhaps to trust them to executors.

W. C.

LETTER CLV.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, March 9, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have this moment finished a comparison of your remarks with my text, and feel so sensibly my obligations to your great accuracy and kindness, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of expressing them immediately. I only wish instead of revising the two first books of the Iliad, you could have found leisure to revise the whole two poems, sensible how much my work would have benefited.

I have not always adopted your lines, though often, perhaps at least as good as my own; because there will and must be disimilarity of manner between two so accustomed to the pen as we are. But I have let few passages go unamended, which you seemed to think exceptionable; and this not at all from

complaisance; for in such a cause I would not sacrifice an iota on that principle, but on clear conviction.

I have as yet heard nothing from Johnson, about the two MSS. you announce, but feel ashamed that I should want your letter to remind me of your obliging offer to inscribe Sir Thomas More to me, should you resolve to publish him. Of my consent to such a measure you need not doubt. I am covetous of respect and honor from all such as you.

Tame hare, at present, I have none. But to make amends, I have a beautiful little spaniel called Beau, to whom I will give the kiss your Sister Sally intended for the former. Unless she should command me to bestow it elsewhere; it shall attend on her directions.

I am going to take a last dinner with a most agreeable family, who have been my old neighbours ever since I have lived at Weston. On Monday they go to London, and in the summer to an estate in Oxfordshire, which is to be their home in future. The occasion is not at all a pleasant one to me, nor does it leave me spirits to add more, than that I am, dear Sir, Most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER CLVI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, March 11, 1792.

MY DEAR JOHNNY,

You talk of primroses that you pulled on Candlemas day; but what think you of me who heard a nightingale on New-year's day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune; good indeed, for if it was at all an omen it could not be an unfavourable one. The winter however is now making himself amends, and seems the more peevish for having been encroached on at so undue a season. Nothing less than a large slice out of the spring will satisfy him.

Lady Hesketh left us yesterday. She intended to have left us four days sooner; but in the evening before the day fixed for her departure, snow enough fell to occasion just so much delay of it.

We have faint hopes that in the month of May we shall see her again. I know that you have had a letter from her, and you will no doubt have the grace not to make her wait long for an answer.

We expect Mr. Rose on Tuesday; but he stays

with us only till the Saturday following. With him I shall have some conferences on the subject of Homer, respecting a new edition I mean, and some perhaps on the subject of Milton; on him I have not yet begun to comment, or even fix the time when I shall.

Forget not your promised visit!

W. C.

To the NIGHTINGALE,

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY, 1792.

Whence is it, that amaz'd I hear
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

I annex to this letter the stanzas which Cowper composed on the wonderful incident here mentioned.

And why, since thousands would be proud,
Of such a favor shewn,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practis'd in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make e'en January charm,
And ev'ry season spring.

LETTER CLVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, March 23, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have read your play carefully, and with great pleasure; it seems now to be a performance that cannot fail to do you much credit. Yet, unless my memory deceives me, the scene between Cecilia and Heron in the garden, has lost something that pleased me much, when I saw it first; and I am not sure that you have not likewise obliterated an account of Sir Thomas's execution, that I found very pathetic. It would be strange if in these two particulars, I should seem to miss what never existed; you will presently know whether I am as good at remembering what I never saw, as I am at forgetting what I have seen. But if I am right, I cannot help recommending the omitted passages to your reconsideration. If the play were designed for representation, I should be apt to think Cecilia's first speech rather too long, and should prefer to have it broken into dialogue, by an interposition now and then from

one of her Sisters. But since it is designed as I understand for the closet only, that objection seems of no importance; at no rate, however, would I expunge it; because it is both prettily imagined, and elegantly written.

I have read your *cursory remarks*, and am much pleased both with the style and the argument. Whether the latter be new, or not, I am not competent to judge; if it be, you are entitled to much praise for the invention of it. Where other data are wanting to ascertain the time, when an author of many pieces wrote each in particular, there can be no better criterion by which to determine the point, than the more or less proficiency manifested in the composition. Of this proficiency, where it appears, and of those plays in which it appears not, you seem to have judged well and truly; and consequently I approve of your arrangement.

I attended, as you desired me, in reading the character of Cecilia to the hint you gave me concerning your Sister Sally, and give you joy of such a Sister. This, however, not exclusively of the rest, for though they may not all be Cecilias, I have a strong persuasion, that they are all very amiable.

W. C.

LETTER CLVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 25, 1792.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Mr. Rose's longer stay than he at first intended, was the occasion of the longer delay of my answer to your note, as you may both have perceived by the date thereof, and learned from his information. It was a daily trouble to me to see it lying in the window-seat, while I knew you were in expectation of its arrival. By this time I presume you have seen him, and have seen likewise Mr. Hayley's friendly letter and complimentary sonnet, as well as the letter of the honest Quaker; all of which, at least the two former, I shall be glad to receive again at a fair opportunity. Mr. Hayley's letter slept six weeks in Johnson's custody. It was necessary I should answer it without delay, and accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things, how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long; especially on account of the distress that I knew it must have occa-

sioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn, that in the long interval of my non-correspondence, he had suffered anxiety and mortification enough; so much that I dare say he made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What, indeed, could he imagine less, than that I meant by such an obstinate silence, to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship, in short, that I considered him as a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him. He is now, however, convinced that I love him, as indeed I do, and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power.

I have likewise a very pleasing letter from Mr. Park, which I wish you were here to read; and a very pleasing poem that came enclosed in it for my revisal, written when he was only twenty years of age, yet wonderfully well written, though wanting some correction.

To Mr. Hurdis I return Sir Thomas More tomorrow; having revised it a second time. He is now a very respectable figure, and will do my friend, who

gives him to the public this spring, considerable credit.

W. C.

LETTER CLIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

March 30, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My mornings, ever since you went, have been given to my correspondents; this morning I have already written a long letter to Mr. Park, giving my opinion of his poem, which is a favorable one. I forget whether I showed it to you when you were here, and even whether I had then received it. He has genius and delicate taste; and if he were not an engraver, might be one of our first hands in poetry.

W. C.

LETTER CLX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Weston, April 5, 1792.

You talk, my dear friend, as John Bunyan says, like one that has the egg-shell still upon his head. You talk of the mighty favors that you have received from me, and forget entirely those for which I am indebted to you; but though you forget them, I shall not, nor ever think that I have requited you, so long as any opportunity presents itself of rendering you the smallest service: small indeed is all that I can ever hope to render.

You now perceive, and sensibly, that not without reason I complained as I used to do, of those tiresome rogues the printers. Bless yourself that you have not two thick quartos to bring forth as I had. My vexation was always much increased by this reflection; they are every day, and all day long, employed in printing for somebody, and why not for me? This was adding mortification to disappointment, so that I often lost all patience.

The suffrage of Doctor Robertson makes more

than amends for the scurvy jest passed upon me by the wag unknown. I regard him not; nor, except for about two moments after I first heard of his doings, have I ever regarded him. I have somewhere a secret enemy; I know not for what cause he should be so, but he, I imagine, supposes that he has a cause: it is well, however, to have but one; and I will take all the care I can not to encrease the number.

I have begun my notes, and am playing the commentator manfully. The worst of it is that I am anticipated in almost all my opportunities to shine by those who have gone before me.

W. C.

LETTER CLXI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, April 6, 1792

MY DEAR FRIEND,

God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed they are apt soon to terminate! But as I said before, I feel a dis-

position of heart toward you, that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event, a propitious omen.

* * * * * *

Horace says somewhere, though I may quote it amiss, perhaps, for I have a terrible memory,

Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
Consentit astrum.———

**** Our *stars consent*, at least have had an influence somewhat similar in another and more important article.——* * *

It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I hope to see you at Weston; for as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered in the light of impossibilities. Come then, my friend, and be as welcome, as the country people say here, as the flowers in May! I am happy, as I say, in the expectation, but the fear, or rather the consciousness, that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes it a trembling kind of happiness, and a doubtful.

After the privacy, which I have mentioned above, I went to Huntingdon; soon after my arrival

there, I took up my quarters at the house of the Rev. Mr. Unwin; I lived with him while he lived, and ever since his death have lived with his widow. Her, therefore, you will find mistress of the house; and I judge of you amiss, or you will find her just such as you would wish. To me she has been often a nurse, and invariably the kindest friend, through a thousand adversities that I have had to grapple with in the course of almost thirty years. I thought it better to introduce her to you thus, than to present her to you at your coming, quite a stranger.

Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for with you for an interpreter, I shall be afraid of none of them. And in truth, if you think that you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also, for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided*: being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes as

> No mighty store!
> His own works neatly bound, and little more!

You shall know how this has come to pass hereafter.

Tell me, my friend, are your letters in your

own hand-writing? If so, I am in pain for your eyes, lest by such frequent demands upon them I should hurt them. I had rather write you three letters for one, much as I prize your letters, than *that* should happen. And now, for the present, adieu—I am going to accompany Milton into the lake of fire and brimstone, having just begun my annotations.

W. C.

LETTER CLXII.

To the Rev. Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, April 8, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your entertaining and pleasant letter, resembling in that respect all that I receive from you, deserved a more expeditious answer, and should have had what it so well deserved, had it not reached me at a time, when, deeply in debt to all my correspondents, I had letters to write without number: Like autumnal leaves that strew the brooks, in *Vallombrosa*, the unanswered farrago lay before me. If I quote at all, you must expect me

henceforth to quote none but Milton, since for a long time to come I shall be occupied with him only.

I was much pleased with the extract you gave me from your Sister Eliza's letter; she writes very elegantly, and (if I might say it without seeming to flatter you) I should say much in the manner of her Brother. It is well for your Sister Sally that gloomy Dis is already a married man, else perhaps finding her, as he found Proserpine, studying botany in the fields, he might transport her to his own flowerless abode, where all her hopes of improvement in that science would be at an end for ever.

What letter of the tenth of December is that which you say you have not yet answered? Consider it is April now, and I never remember any thing that I write half so long. But perhaps it relates to Calchas, for I do remember that you have not yet furnished me with the secret history of him and his family, which I demanded from you.

Adieu. Your's most sincerely.

W. C.

I rejoice that you are so well with the learned Bishop of Sarum, and well remember how he ferretted

the vermin Lauder out of all his hidings, when I was a boy at Westminster.

I have not yet studied with your last remarks before me, but hope soon to find an opportunity.

LETTER CLXIII.

To Mrs. THROCKMORTON.

Weston, April 16, 1792.

MY DEAR LADY FROG,

I thank you for your letter, as sweet as it was short, and as sweet as good news could make it. You encourage a hope that has made me happy ever since I have entertained it. And if my wishes can hasten the event, it will not be long suspended. As to your jealousy, I mind it not, or only to be pleased with it; I shall say no more on the subject at present than this, that of all ladies living, a certain lady, whom I need not name, would be the lady of my choice for a certain gentleman, were the whole sex submitted to my election.

What a delightful anecdote is that which you tell me of a young lady detected in the very act of

stealing our Catharina's praises; is it possible that she can survive the same, the mortification of such a discovery; Can she ever see the shame company again, or any company that she can suppose, by the remotest possibility, may have heard the tidings? If she can, she must have an assurance equal to her vanity. A lady in London stole my song on the broken Rose, or rather would have stolen, and have passed it for her own. But she too was unfortunate in her attempt; for there happened to be a female Cousin of mine in company, who knew that I had written it. It is very flattering to a poet's pride that the ladies should thus hazard every thing for the sake of appropriating his verses. I may say with Milton, that I am fallen *on evil tongues, and evil days*, being not only plundered of that, which belongs to me, but being charged with that, which does not. Thus it seems (and I have learned it from more quarters than one) that a report is, and has been some time current in this and the neighbouring counties, that though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the Slave Trade in the Task, I am in reality a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me, that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account. Not knowing how I could better, or more

effectually refute the scandal, I have this morning sent a copy to the Northampton paper, prefaced by a short letter to the printer, specifying the occasion. The verses are in honour of Mr. Wilberforce, and sufficiently expressive of my present sentiments on the subject. You are a wicked fair one for disappointing us of our expected visit, and therefore out of mere spite I will not insert them. I have been very ill these ten days, and for the same spite's sake will not tell you what has ailed me. But lest you should die of a fright, I will have the mercy to tell you that I am recovering.

Mrs. G——, and her little ones are gone, but your Brother is still here. He told me that he had some expectations of Sir John at Weston; if he come, I shall most heartily rejoice once more to see him at a table so many years his own.

W. C.

SONNET,*

To WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee, by cruel men and impious, call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slav'ry's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain!
Thou hast achiev'd a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause:
Hope smiles, joy springs, and tho' cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near,
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenc'd with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above!

* *NOTE BY THE EDITOR.*

The following Sonnet, not printed in the collected Works of Cowper, is the poem he alluded to in this letter.

LETTER CLXIV.

To the Rev. J. JEKYLL RYE.

Weston, April 16, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am truly sorry that you should have suffered any apprehensions, such as your letter indicates, to molest you for a moment. I believe you to be as honest a man as lives, and consequently do not believe it possible that you could in your letter to Mr. Pitt's, or any otherwise, wilfully misrepresent me. In fact you did not; my opinions on the subject in question were, when I had the pleasure of seeing you, such as in that letter you state them to be, and such they still continue.

If any man concludes because I allow myself the use of sugar and rum, that therefore I am a friend to the *Slave Trade*, he concludes rashly, and does me great wrong; for the man lives not, who abhors it more than I do. My reasons for my own practice are satisfactory to myself, and they whose practice is contrary, are, I suppose satisfied with their's. So far is good. Let every man act according to his own judgment and conscience, but if we condemn another

for not seeing with our eyes, we are unreasonable, and if we reproach him on that account, we are uncharitable, which is a still greater evil.

I had heard, before I received the favor of your's, that such a report of me, as you mention, had spread about the country. But my informant told me that it was founded thus: The people of Olney petitioned Parliament for the abolition—my name was sought among the subscribers, but was not found—a question was asked, how that happened? Answer was made, that I had once indeed been an enemy to the Slave Trade, but had changed my mind, for that having lately read a history, or an account of Africa I had seen it there inserted, that till the commencement of that traffic, the Negroes multiplying at a prodigious rate, were necessitated to devour each other; for which reason I had judged it better that the trade should continue, than that they should be again reduced to so horrid a custom

Now all this is a fable. I have read no such history; I never in my life read any such assertion nor, had such an assertion presented itself to me, should I have drawn any such conclusion from it: On the contrary, bad as it were, I think it would be better, the negroes should have eaten one another,

than that we thould carry them to market. The single reason why I did not sign the petition was, because I was never asked to do it, and the reason why I was never asked was, because I am not a parishioner of Olney.

Thus stands the matter. You will do me the justice, I dare say, to speak of me as of a man who abhors the commerce, which is now I hope in a fair way to be abolished, as often as you shall find occasion. And I beg you henceforth to do yourself the justice to believe it impossible that I should for a moment suspect you of duplicity or misrepresentation. I have been grossly slandered, but neither by you, nor in consequence of any thing that you have either said or written. I remain therefore, still as heretofore, with great respect,

Much and truly yours,

W. C.

Mrs. Unwin's compliments attend you.

LETTER CLXV.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, May 20, 1792.

MY DEAREST COZ.

I rejoice, as thou reasonably supposest me to do, in the matrimonial news communicated in your last. Not that it was altogether news to me, for twice I had received broad hints of it from Lady Frog, by letter, and several times *vivâ voce* while she was here. But she enjoined *me* secrecy as well as *you*, and you know that all secrets are safe with me; safer far than the winds in the bags of Æolus. I know not in fact the lady whom it would give me more pleasure to call Mrs. Courtenay, than the lady in question; partly because I know her, but especially because I know her to be all that I can wish in a neighbour.

I have often observed, that there is a regular alternation of good and evil in the lot of men, so that a favorable incident may be considered as the harbinger of an unfavorable one, and *vice versâ*. Dr. Madan's experience witnesses to the truth of this observation. One day he gets a broken head, and the

next a mitre to heal it. I rejoice that he has met with so effectual a cure, though my joy is not unmingled with concern; for till now I had some hope of seeing him, but since I live in the North, and his episcopal call is in the West, that is a gratification, I suppose, which I must no longer look for.

My sonnet, which I sent you, was printed in the Northampton paper last week, and this week it produced me a complimentary one in the same paper, which served to convince me at least by the matter of it, that my own was not published without occasion, and that it had answered its purpose.

My correspondence with Hayley proceeds briskly, and is very affectionate on both sides. I expect him here in about a fortnight, and wish heartily, with Mrs. Unwin, that you would give him a meeting. I have promised him, indeed, that he shall find us alone, but you are one of the family.

I wish much to print the following lines in one of the daily papers. Lord S's vindication of the poor culprit in the affair of Cheit-sing, has confirmed me in the belief that he has been injuriously treated, and I think it an act merely of justice to take a little notice of him.

LIBRARY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

To WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

BY AN OLD SCHOOL-FELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

Hastings! I knew thee young, and of a mind
While young, humane, conversable, and kind:
Nor can I well believe thee gentle THEN,
Now grown a villain, and the WORST of men.
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the BEST.

If thou wilt take the pains to send them to thy news-monger, I hope thou wilt do well. Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CLXVI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esq.

Weston, May 20, 1792.

MY DEAREST OF ALL JOHNNYS,

I am not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves at least that you attempt, and wish to do it, and

these are good symptoms. Woe to those who enter on the ministry of the Gospel without having previously asked at least from God, a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself, because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is, therefore, matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, and such it is to Mrs. Unwin. She is, I thank God, tolerably well, and loves you. As to the time of your journey hither, the sooner after June the better; till then we shall have company.

I forget not my debts to your dear Sister, and your Aunt Balls. Greet them both with a Brother's kiss, and place it to my account. I will write to them when Milton, and a thousand other engagements will give me leave. Mr. Hayley is here on a visit. We have formed a friendship that I trust will last for life, and render us an edifying example to all future poets.

Adieu! Lose no time in coming after the time mentioned.

W. C.

The reader is informed by the close of the last letter that I was at this time the guest of Cowper. Our meeting, so singularly produced, was a source of reciprocal delight. We looked cheerfully forward to the unclouded enjoyment of many social and literary hours.

My host, though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life, as friendship could wish him to be; and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by age, discovered a benevolent alertness of character that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself:—I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady, who having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health, and the renown

of the poet, whom she had the happiness to preserve.

It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching, and a more satisfactory point of view.—Their tender attention to each other, their simple devout gratitude for the mercies which they had experienced together, and their constant, but unaffected, propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend, the deep sense, which they incessantly felt, of their mutual obligations to each other, afforded me very singular gratification; which my reader will conceive the more forcibly, when he has perused the following exquisite Sonnet, addressed by Cowper to Mrs. Unwin.

SONNET.

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings;
Such aid from Heaven as some have feign'd they drew!
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
And undebas'd by praise of meaner things!
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings
I may record thy worth, with honor due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,——
Verse that immortalizes whom it sings!

But thou hast little need: there is a book,
By seraphs writ, with beams of heavenly light
On which the eyes of God not rarely look;
A chronicle of actions, just and bright!

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

The delight that I derived from a perfect view of the virtues, the talents, and the present domestic enjoyments of Cowper, was suddenly overcast by the darkest and most painful anxiety.

After passing our mornings in social study, we usually walked out together at noon. In returning from one of our rambles, around the pleasant village at Weston, we were met by Mr. Greatheed, an accomplished minister of the gospel, who resides at Newport-Pagnel, and whom Cowper described to me in terms of cordial esteem.

He came forth to meet us as we drew near the house, and it was soon visible from his countenance and manner, that he had ill news to impart. After the most tender preparation that humanity could de-

vise, he acquainted Cowper that Mrs. Unwin, was under the immediate pressure of a paralytic attack.

My agitated friend ran to the sight of the sufferer:—he returned to me in a state that alarmed me in the highest degree for his faculties:—his first speech to me was wild in the extreme: my answer would appear little less so; but it was addressed to the predominant fancy of my unhappy friend, and with the blessing of Heaven it produced an instantaneous calm in his troubled mind.

From that moment he rested on my friendship, with such mild and cheerful confidence, that his affectionate spirit regarded me as sent providentially to support him in a season of the severest affliction.

A very fortunate incident enabled me to chear him by a little shew of medical assistance, in a form that was highly beneficial to his compassionate mind, whatever its real influence might be on the palsied limbs of our interesting patient.

Having formerly provided myself with an electrical apparatus, for the purpose of applying it medicinally to counteract a continual tendency to inflammation in the eyes, I had used it occasionally, for several years, in trying to relieve various maladies in my rustic neighbours; often indeed with no success,

but now and then with the happiest effect. I wished to try this powerful, though uncertain remedy on the present occasion; and enquired most eagerly if the village of Weston could produce an electrical machine:—It was hardly to be expected, but it so happened, that a worthy inhabitant of Weston, a man whom Cowper regarded for uncommon gentleness of manners, and for an ingenious mind, possessed exactly such an apparatus as we wanted, which he had partly constructed himself.

This good man, Mr. Socket, was absent from the village, but his wife, for whose relief the apparatus had been originally formed, most readily lent it to her suffering neighbour. With this seasonable aid, seconded by medicines probably more efficacious, from a physician (of consummate skill and benevolence, united to the most fascinating manners) whom I was then so happy as to reckon in the list of my living friends, Mrs. Unwin was gradually restored.

But the progress of her recovery, and its influence on the tender spirits of Cowper, will sufficiently appear in the following letters. I shall have a mournful pleasure in adding to these a few Verses, in which the gratitude of Cowper has celebrated, most tenderly, the kindness of the late Dr. Austin, the physician

to whom I have alluded, and whose memory is most deservedly dear to me. The extreme tenderness of Cowper is indeed very forcibly displayed in that generous excess of praise with which he speaks of my services on his sudden affliction.

LETTER CLXVII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, May 24, 1792.

I wish with all my heart, my dearest Coz. that I had not ill news for the subject of the present letter. My friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, and of which you were yourself a witness. Gregson would not allow that first stroke to be paralytic, but this he acknowledges to be so; and with respect to the former, I never had myself any doubt that it was; but this has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck; it is with difficulty that she opens her eyes, and she cannot keep them open; the muscles necessary to the purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving

powers, from place to place, and the use of her right hand and arm, she has entirely lost them.

It has happened well, that of all men living the man most qualified to assist and comfort me, is here, though till within these few days I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley! Hayley who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When he returns to Town, as he must, alas! too soon, he will pay his respects to you.

I will not conclude without adding that our poor patient is beginning, I hope, to recover from this stroke also; but her amendment is slow, as must be expected at her time of life and in such a disorder. I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better.

It was not possible to prevail on Mrs. Unwin to let me send for Dr. Kerr, but Hayley has written to his friend Dr. Austin a representation of her case, and we expect his opinion and advice to-morrow. In the mean time, we have borrowed an electrical machine from our neighbour Socket, the effect of which she tried yesterday, and the day before, and we think it has been of material service.

She was seized while Hayley and I were walking, and Mr. Greatheed, who called while we were absent, was with her.

I forgot in my last to thank thee for the proposed amendments of my friend. Whoever he is, make my compliments to him, and thank him. The passages to which he objects have been all altered, and when he shall see them new dressed, I hope he will like them better.

W. C.

LETTER CLXVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 26, 1792.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Knowing that you will be anxious to learn how we go on, I write a few lines to inform you that Mrs. Unwin daily recovers a little strength, and a little power of utterance; but she seems strongest, and her speech is more distinct in a morning. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you.

dearly for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him.

Adieu, my dear sweet Coz. Mrs. Unwin, as plainly as her poor lips can speak, sends her best love, and Hayley threatens in a few days to lay close seige to your affections in person.

W. C.

There is some hope, I find, that the Chancellor may continue in office, and I shall be glad if he does; because we have no single man worthy to succeed him.

I open my letter again to thank you, my dearest Coz. for yours just received. Though happy, as you well know to see *you* at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose; yet once again, I am willing and desirous to believe, we shall be a happy trio at Weston; but unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure. Farewell.—Thou shalt know how we go on.

To Dr. AUSTIN,

OF CECIL-STREET, LONDON.

Austin! accept a grateful verse from me!
The poet's treasure! no inglorious fee!
Lov'd by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in a verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of time aside,
Immortalizing names which else had died:
And Oh! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health:
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompence his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend! I love thee, tho' unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

LETTER CLXIX.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, June 4, 1792.

MY DEAREST ROSE,

I am not such an ungrateful and insensible animal, as to have neglected you thus long without reason. * * * * * *

I cannot say that I am sorry that our dear Johnny finds the pulpit door shut against him at present. He is young, and can afford to wait another year; neither is it to be regretted, that his time of preparation for an office of so much importance as that of a minister of God's word, should have been a little protracted. It is easier to direct the movements of a great army, than to guide a few souls to Heaven; the way is narrow, and full of snares, and the guide himself has the most difficulties to encounter. But I trust he will do well. He is single in his views, honest-hearted, and desirous by prayer and study of the scripture, to qualify himself for the service of his great Master, who will suffer no such man to fail for want of his aid and protection.

W. C.

LETTER CLXX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 4, 1792.

ALL'S WELL,

Which words I place as conspicuously as possibly, and prefix them to my letter, to

save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moments anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment still, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows, the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. She walked so well this morning, that she told me at my first visit, she had entirely forgot her illness, and she spoke so distinctly and had so much of her usual countenance, that had it been possible, she would have made me forget it too.

Returned from my walk, blown to tatters—found two dear things in the study, your letter, and my Mary! She is bravely well, and your beloved epistle does us both good. I found your kind pencil note in my song-book, as soon as I came down on the morning of your departure, and Mary was vexed to the heart, that the simpletons who watched her, supposed her asleep, when she was not, for she learned soon after you were gone, that you would have peeped at her, had you known her to have been awake: I perhaps might have had a peep too, and was as vexed as she; but if it please God, we shall make ourselves large amends for all lost peeps by and by at Eartham.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 5, 1792.

Yesterday was a noble day with us—speech almost perfect—eyes open almost the whole day, without any effort to keep them so; and the step wonderfully improved. But the night has been almost a sleepless one, owing partly I believe to her having had as much sleep again as usual the night before; for even when she is in tolerable health she hardly ever sleeps well two nights together. I found her accordingly a little out of spirits this morning, but still insisting on it that she is better. Indeed she always tells me so, and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then at least, for then she will be best of all. She is now (the clock has just struck eleven) endeavouring, I believe, to get a little sleep, for which reason I do not yet let her know that I have received your letter.

Can I ever honor you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not: I am however so

sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have in short a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here, and though I believe that if any man living can do me good, you will, I cannot yet persuade myself, that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter; you are yourself a good, which I can never value enough, and whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back as you. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble.

I rose this morning wrapt round with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears, but if I see Mary's amendment a little advanced, when she rises, I shall be better.

I have just been with her again. Except that she is fatigued for want of sleep, she seems as well as yesterday. The post brings me a letter from Hurdis, who is broken-hearted for a dying Sister. Had we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of

Death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we, and our friends, escape them but a single day.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 7, 1792.

Of what materials can you suppose me made, if after all the rapid proofs that you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually? But you must permit me to be melancholy now and then; or if you will not, I must be so without your permission; for that sable thread is so intermixed with the very thread of my existence as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content, therefore; let me sigh and groan, but always be sure that I love you! You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in this rhapsody about myself, and my melancholy.

had my present mood been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. So in fact she does, and has performed several little feats to-day; such as either she could not perform at all, or very feebly, while you were with us.

I shall be glad if you have seen Johnny as I call him, my Norfolk Cousin; he is a sweet lad, but as shy as a bird. It costs him always two or three days to open his mouth before a stranger; but when he does, he is sure to please by the innocent cheerfulness of his conversation. His Sister too is one of my idols, for the resemblance she bears to my Mother.

Mary and you have all my thoughts; and how should it be otherwise? She looks well, is better, and loves you dearly.

Adieu!

My dear Brother,

W. C.

LETTER CLXXIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 10, 1792.

I do indeed anxiously wish that every thing you do may prosper: and should I at last prosper by your means, shall taste double sweetness in prosperity for that reason.

I rose this morning, as I usually do, with a mind all in sables. In this mood I presented myself to Mary's bedside, whom I found though after many hours lying awake, yet cheerful, and not to be affected with my desponding humour. It is a great blessing to us both, that poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness, that nothing shakes. She is now in the study, and is certainly in some degree better than she was yesterday, but how to measure that little I know not, except by saying that it is just perceptible.

I am glad that you have seen my Johnny of Norfolk, because I know it will be a comfort to you to have seen your successor. He arrived, to my great joy, yesterday; and not having bound himself to any

particular time of going, will, I hope, stay long with us. You are now once more snug in your retreat, and I give you joy of your return to it, after the bustle in which you have lived since you left Weston. Weston mourns your absence, and will mourn it till she sees you again. What is become of Milton I know not; I do nothing but scribble to you, and seem to have no relish for any other employment. I have however, in pursuit of your idea, to compliment Darwin, put a few stanzas together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another.

I am now going to walk with Johnny, much cheered since I began writing to you, and by Mary's looks and good spirits.

W. C.

To Dr. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN.

Two poets (poets by report
Not oft so well agree)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth,
By labours of their own.

We, therefore, pleas'd, extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete.
Rich in embellishment, as strong
And learn'd, as it is sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;
Though could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would, they must, at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundic'd eye:

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

LETTER CLXXIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, June 11, 1792.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Thou art ever in my thoughts, whether I am writing to thee or not, and my correspondence seems to grow upon me at such a rate that I am not able to address thee so often as I would. In fact, I live only to write letters. Hayley is as you see added to the number, and to him I write almost as duly as I rise in the morning; nor is he only added, but his friend Carwardine also—Carwardine the generous, the disinterested, the friendly. I seem in short to have stumbled suddenly on a race of heroes, men who resolve to have no interests of their own till mine are served.

But I will proceed to other matters, and that concern me more intimately, and more immediately, than all that can be done for me either by the great, or the small, or by both united. Since I wrote last, Mrs. Unwin has been continually improving in strength, but at so gradual a rate that I can only mark it by saying that she moves about every day

with less support than the former. Her recovery is most of all retarded by want of sleep. On the whole I believe she goes on as well as could be expected, though not quite well enough to satisfy me. And Dr. Austin, speaking from the reports I have made of her, says he has no doubt of her restoration.

During the last two months I seem to myself to have been in a dream. It has been a most eventful period, and fruitful to an uncommon degree, both in good and evil. I have been very ill, and suffered excruciating pain. I recovered, and became quite well again. I received within my doors a man, but lately, an entire stranger, and who now loves me as his brother, and forgets himself to serve me. Mrs. Unwin has been seized with an illness that for many days threatened to deprive me of her, and to cast a gloom, an impenetrable one, on all my future prospects. She is now granted to me again. A few days since I should have thought the moon might have descended into my purse as likely as any emolument, and now it seems not impossible. All this has come to pass with such rapidity as events move with in romance indeed, but not often in real life. Events of all sorts creep or fly exactly as God pleases.

To the foregoing I have to add in conclusion.

the arrival of my Johnny, just when I wanted him most, and when only a few days before I had no expectation of him. He came to dinner on Saturday, and I hope I shall keep him long. What comes next I know not, but shall endeavour, as you exhort me, to look for good, and I know I shall have your prayers that I may not be disappointed.

Hayley tells me you begin to be jealous of him, lest I should love him more than I love you, and bids me say, "that should I do so, you in revenge must love him more than I do."——Him I know you will love, and me, because you have such a habit of doing it that you cannot help it.

Adieu! My knuckles ache with letter writing. With my poor patient's affectionate remembrances, and Johnny's,

I am ever thine,

W. C.

LETTER CLXXV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 19, 1792.

* * * * Thus have I filled a whole page to my dear William of Eartham, and have not said a syllable yet about my Mary. A sure sign that she goes on well. Be it known to you that we have these four days discarded our sedan with two elbows. Here is no more carrying, or being carried, but she walks up stairs boldly, with one hand upon the balustrade, and the other under my arm, and in like manner she comes down in a morning. Still I confess she is feeble, and misses much of her former strength. The weather too is sadly against her: it deprives her of many a good turn in the orchard, and fifty times have I wished this very day, that Dr. Darwin's scheme of giving rudders and sails to the Ice-islands, that spoil all our summers, were actually put into practice. So should we have gentle airs instead of churlish blasts, and those everlasting sources of bad weather being once navigated into the Southern hemisphere, my Mary would recover as fast

again. We are both of your mind respecting the journey to Eartham, and think that July, if by that time she have strength for the journey, will be better than August. We shall have more long days before us, and them we shall want as much for our return as for our going forth. This however must be left to to the Giver of all good. If our visit to you be according to his will, he will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it, and thus I speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary actually is one, and would not set her foot over the threshold, unless she had, or thought she had God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of every thing:—afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, June 27, 1792.

Well then——let us talk about this journey to Eartham. You wish me to

settle the time of it, and I wish with all my heart to be able to do so, living in hopes meanwhile that I shall be able to do it soon. But some little time must necessarily intervene. Our Mary must be able to walk alone, to cut her own food, feed herself, and to wear her own shoes, for at present she wears mine. All things considered, my friend and brother you will see the expediency of waiting a little before we set off to Eartham. We mean indeed before that day arrives to make a trial of the strength of her head, how far it may be able to bear the motion of a carriage, a motion that it has not felt these seven years. I grieve that we are thus circumstanced, and that we cannot gratify ourselves in a delightful and innocent project without all these precautions, but when we have leaf-gold to handle, we must do it tenderly.

I thank you, my brother, both for presenting my authorship to your friend Guy, and for the excellent verses with which you have inscribed your present. There are none neater or better turned—with what shall I requite you? I have nothing to send you but a gimcrack, which I have prepared for my bride and bridegroom neighbours, who are expected to morrow! You saw in my book a poem entitled

Catharina, which concluded with a wish that we had her for a neighbour; this therefore is called

CATHARINA:

THE SECOND PART.

ON

Her Marriage to GEORGE COURTENAY, *Esq*

Believe it or not, as you chuse,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.

I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And Lo! she is actually come.

And such prophecy some may despise
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approv'd in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.

'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth,
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth,
Of the person for whom it is form'd.

Maria would leave us I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all;
But less to our grief could we view,
Catharina the Queen of the Hall.

And therefore I wish'd as I did,
And therefore this union of hands,
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry amen to the bands.

Since therefore I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again.

With one I have made her wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life,
How soon I can make her a mother.

LETTER CLXXVII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, July 4, 1792.

I know not how you proceed in your Life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters to you, and the nuptial song I inserted in my last, I have literally done nothing since I saw you. Nothing I mean in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavouring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well, and had rather carry this point completely than be the most famous editor of Milton, that the world has ever seen, or shall see.

Your humorous descant upon my art of wishing made us merry, and consequently did good to us both. I sent my wish to the Hall yesterday. They are excellent neighbours, and so friendly to me, that I wished to gratify them. When I went to pay my

first visit, George flew into the court to meet me, and when I entered the parlour Catharina, sprang into my arms.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, July, 15, 1792.

The progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road of recovery. I cannot indeed say that she moves, but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not therefore, at present, what to say about this long postponed journey. The utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment is this——You know that you are dear to us both: true it is that you are so, and equally true that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty, we will fly to Eartham. I have been but once within the Hall door since the Courtenays came home, much as

I have been pressed to dine there, and have hardly escaped giving a little offence by declining it: but though I should offend all the world by my obstinacy in this instance, I would not leave my poor Mary alone. Johnny serves me as a representative, and him I send without scruple. As to the affair of Milton, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since to tell him that the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continuing, and being likely to continue, I knew not when I should be able to proceed. The translations (I said) were finished, except the revisal of a part.

God bless your dear little boy and poet! I thank him for exercising his dawning genius upon me, and shall be still happier to thank him in person.

Abbot is painting me so true,
That (trust me) you would stare
And hardly know, at the first view,
If I were here, or there.

I have sat twice; and the few who have seen his copy of me, are much struck with the resemblance. He is a sober, quiet man, which considering that I must have him at least a week longer for an inmate, is a great comfort to me.

My Mary sends you her best love. She can walk now, leaning on my arm only, and her speech is certainly much improved. I long to see you. Why cannot you and dear Tom spend the remainder of the summer with us? We might then all set off for Eartham merrily together. But I retract this, conscious that I am unreasonable. It is a wretched world, and what we would, is almost always what we cannot.

Adieu! Love me, and be sure of a return.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXIX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, July 22, 1792.

This important affair, my dear brother, is at last decided, and we are coming. Wednesday se'nnight, if nothing occur to make a later day necessary, is the day fixed for our journey. Our rate of travelling must depend on Mary's ability to bear it. Our mode of travelling will occupy three

days unavoidably, for we shall come in a coach. Abbot finishes my picture to-morrow; on Wednesday he returns to Town, and is commissioned to order one down for us, with four steeds to draw it:

——— "Hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
That cannot go but forty miles a day."

Send us our route, for I am as ignorant of it almost as if I were in a strange country. We shall reach St. Alban's, I suppose, the first day; say where we must finish our second day's journey, and at what inn we may best repose? As to the end of the third day, we know where that will find us, viz. in the arms, and under the roof of our beloved Hayley.

General Cowper having heard a rumour of this intended migration, desires to meet me on the road, that we may once more see each other. He lives at Ham, near Kingston. Shall we go through Kingston, or near it? For I would give him as little trouble as possible, though he offers very kindly to come as far as Barnet for that purpose. Nor must I forget Carwardine, who so kindly desired to be informed what way we should go. On what point of the road will it be easiest for him to find us? On all these points

You must be my oracle. My friend and brother, we shall overwhelm you with our numbers; this is all the trouble that I have left. My Johnny of Norfolk, happy in the thought of accompanying us, would be broken-hearted to be left behind.

In the midst of all these solicitudes I laugh to think what they are made of, and what an important thing it is for me to travel. Other men steal away from their homes silently, and make no disturbance, but when I move, houses are turned upside down, maids are turned out of their beds, all the counties through which I pass appear to be in an uproar—— Surry greets me by the mouth of the General, and Essex by that of Carwardine. How strange does all this seem to a man who has seen no bustle, and made none, for twenty years together.

Adieu,

W. C.

LETTER CLXXX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

Weston, July 29, 1792.

Through floods and flames to your retreat,
I win my desp'rate way,
And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
Will echo your huzza!

You will wonder at the word *desp'rate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third; but could you have any conception of the fears I have had to battle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens, that as the day approaches my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Praye-

has however opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday therefore we set forth.

The terrors, that I have spoken of, would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well, that to whatever cause it be owing (whether to constitution, or to God's express appointment) I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and though you may think there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it for that reason an evil less to be lamented——so much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham!

Well! this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance. Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it, wagging his tail as he went, and evidently shewing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is a half-length, as it is technically, but absurdly called; that is to say, it gives all but the foot and ankle. To-

morrow it goes to town, and will hang some months at Abbot's, when it will be sent to its due destination in Norfolk.

I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to have lost—lost to such a degree, that it is even painful to me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again.

Adieu! my dear, dear Hayley; God give us a happy meeting. Mary sends her love—She is in pretty good plight this morning, having slept well, and for her part, has no fears at all about the journey.

Ever yours,

W. C.

The affectionate little prayer at the close of the last letter prevailed, and Providence conducted these most interesting travellers very safely to my retreat. The delights that I enjoyed in promoting the health and chearfulness of guests so dear to me; in sharing the high gratification of Cowper's society, with my old sympathetic friend Romney; and in beholding that expressive resemblance of the poet, which forms a frontispiece to this work, grow under the pencil of the friendly artist agreeably inspired by the mental dignity of the subject, these delights are indeed treasured in my memory, among those prime blessings of mortal existence, which still call for our gratitude to Heaven, even when they are departed; for even then they still afford us that sweet secondary life, which we form to ourselves, from the pleasing contemplation of past hours very happily employed.

It is however unecessary for me to dwell on the memorable period that Cowper passed under my roof, because a few of his letters written to different friends, while he was with me, will sufficiently describe the beneficial effect which the beautiful scenery of Sussex very visibly produced on his health and spirits. I fear not the imputation of vanity for

inserting the vivid praise of my friend on the spot I inhabited, for I now inhabit it no more, and if I ever had any such vanity, it must have perished with the darling child, for whom I wished to embellish and preserve the scene, that Cowper has so highly commended.

The tender partiality which this most feeling friend had conceived for me, rendered him not a little partial to whatever engaged his thoughts as mine. Many endearing marks of such partiality occurred during his residence at Eartham; but the one which gratified me most, I cannot forbear to mention. I mean the very sweet condescension with which he admitted to his friendship and confidence the child to whom I alluded, at that time a boy of eleven years, whose rare early talents, and rarer modesty, endeared him so much to Cowper, that he allowed and invited him to criticise his Homer. The good natured reader will forgive me, if he happen to find a brief specimen of such juvenile criticism, in their future correspondence.

Homer was not the immediate object of our attention, while Cowper resided at Eartham. The morning hours that we could bestow upon books,

were chiefly devoted to a complete revisal and correction of all the translations, which my friend had finished, from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton ; and we generally amused ourselves after dinner in forming together a rapid metrical version of Andreini's Adamo. But the constant care which the delicate health of Mrs. Unwin required, rendered it impossible for us to be very assiduous in study, and perhaps the best of all studies was, to promote and share that most singular and most exemplary tenderness of attention, with which Cowper incessantly laboured to counteract every infirmity bodily and mental, with which sickness and age had conspired to load this interesting guardian of his afflicted life.

I have myself no language sufficiently strong, or sufficiently tender, to express my just admiration of that angelic, compassionate sensibility, with which Cowper watched over his aged invalide ; but my reader will yet be enabled to form an adequate idea of that sensibility by a copy of his verses, to which it gave rise, when these infirmities grew still more striking on her return to Weston.

The air of the South infused a little portion of fresh strength into her shattered frame, and to give it all possible efficacy, the boy, whom I have

meniioned, and a young associate and fellow-student of his, employed themselves regularly twice a day, in drawing this venerable cripple, in a commodious garden-chair, round the airy hill of Eartham. To Cowper, and to me it was a very pleasing spectacle, to see the benevolent vivacity of blooming youth thus continually labouring for the ease, health, and amusement of disabled age. But of this interesting time I will speak no more, since I have a better record of it to present to my reader in the following letters.

LETTER CLXXXI.

To the Rev. Mr. GREATHEED.

Eartham, August 6, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Having first thanked you for your affectionate and acceptable letter, I will proceed, as well as I can, to answer your equally affectionate request, that I would send you early news of our arrival at Eartham. Here we are in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure grounds that

I have ever seen; but which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say, that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckingamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape bounded by the sea, and in one part by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library, in which I am writing.

It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience, than I expected. I began it indeed with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degrée that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as she might well be, and heard such noises, both within the house, and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently; and when we finished our next day's journey at Ripley, we were both in better condition, both of body and mind, than on the day preceding. At Ripley we found a quiet inn, that housed, as it happened, that night, no company but ourselves. There we slept

well, and rose perfectly refreshed. And except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex hills by moonlight, met with little to complain of, till we arrived about ten o'clock at Eartham. Here we are as happy, as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us. It is almost a paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest, that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive. Our host mentions you with great respect, and bids me tell you that he esteems you highly. Mrs. Unwin, who is, I think, in some points, already the better for her excursion, unites with mine her best compliments both to yourself and Mrs. Greatheed. I have much to see and enjoy before I can be perfectly apprized of all the delights of Eartham, and will therefore now subscribe myself,

Yours,

My dear Sir,

With great sincerity,

W. C.

LETTER CLXXXII.

To Mrs. COURTENAY.

Eartham, August 12, 1792.

MY DEAREST CATHARINA,

Though I have travelled far, nothing did I see in my travels that surprised me half so agreeably as your kind letter; for high as my opinion of your good-nature is, I had no hopes of hearing from you till I should have written first. A pleasure which I intended to allow myself the first opportunity.

After three days confinement in a coach, and suffering as we went all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, we found ourselves late in the evening at the door of our friend Hayley. In every other respect the journey was extremely pleasant. At the Mitre, Barnet, where we lodged the first evening, we found our friend Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery-lane to meet us; and at Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much valued friend General Cowper, whom I had not seen in thirty

years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. Mrs. Unwin, on whose account I had a thousand fears, before we set out, suffered as little from fatigue as myself, and begins I hope already to feel some beneficial effects from the air of Eartham, and the exercise that she takes in one of the most delightful pleasure-grounds in the world. They occupy three sides of a hill, lofty enough to command a view of the sea, which skirts the horizon to a length of many miles, with the Isle of Wight at the end of it. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and inclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.

But think not, my dear Catharina, that amidst all these beauties I shall lose the remembrance of the peaceful, but less splendid, Weston. Your precincts will be as dear to me as ever, when I return; though when that day will arrive I know not, our host being determined, as I plainly see, to keep us as long as possible. Give my best love to your husband. Thank him most kindly for his attention to the old bard of Greece, and pardon me that I do not now send you

an epitaph for Fop. I am not sufficiently recollected to compose even a bagatelle at present; but in due time you shall receive it.

Hayley, who will some time or other I hope see you at Weston, is already prepared to love you both, and being passionately fond of music, longs much to hear you.

Adieu!

W. C.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Eartham, August 14, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Romney is here; it would add much to my happiness if you were of the party; I have prepared Hayley to think highly, that is justly of you, and the time, I hope, will come when you will supersede all need of my recommendation.

Mrs. Unwin gathers strength. I have indeed

great hopes from the air and exercise which this fine season affords her opportunity to use, that ere we return she will be herself again.

W. C.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esq.

Eartham, August 18, 1792.

Wishes in this world are generally vain, and in the next we shall make none. Every day I wish you were of the party, knowing how happy you would be in a place where we have nothing to do but enjoy beautiful scenery, and converse agreeably.

Mrs. Unwin's health continues to improve; and even I, who was well when I came, find myself still better.

Yours,

W. C.

The kind wishes, that my guest thus addressed to Mr. Rose from Eartham, recall so forcibly to my heart a sense of Cowper's cordial and merited esteem for this very interesting friend, and of my severe affliction in having recently lost him, that I trust the reader will forgive me, if I here make a pause in the work before me, and terminate the present volume with a tribute of regard to the memory of a highly promising character, whose early death has proved to all who had the pleasure of knowing him, a source of affectionate regret.

The preceding letters of Cowper to this amiable young man must have prepared even such of my readers, as may be strangers to his person, to take an interest in his fate; and the generous zeal, with which he delighted to assist me in illustrating the life of the poet, whom he fervently loved and revered, entitle him to a record of tender distinction in these pages. Our mutual attachment to Cowper led us to become intimate and confidential friends to each other: and the inscrutable decrees of Heaven have now made it my duty to commemorate the endearing qualities of

my younger friend, whose amiable and affectionate hand I could have wished employed in rendering such an office of kind remembrance to me, instead of his receiving it from mine.

Samuel Rose was born on the 20th of June, 1767, at Chiswick, in Middlesex, where his father, Doctor William Rose, a native of Scotland, conducted an academy during many years, with considerable emolument, and unblemished reputation. This gentleman had married a daughter of Dr. Samuel Clark, a divine of talents and eminence among the dissenters. She bore him many children, but Samuel was his only surviving son, educated with fond and successful care by a parent, who had devoted the chief attention of a very active, benevolent, and chearful mind, to the important duties of education. Rose, being duly prepared by his father for a Scottish university, was sent in 1784 to Glasgow. There he resided in the house of Professor Richardson, a philosopher, and a poet; amiable in every character, and so just to the merits of youth, that a friendship and correspondence commenced between the tutor and his pupil, which terminated only with the life of the latter. Rose was very soon distinguished by that turn of mind, which Lord Clarendon has mentioned

as a characteristic of his own early life, an eager, yet a modest desire to cultivate the acquaintance of men, who had risen to eminence by their intellectual endowments. He gained the esteem of several, whose writings reflect honor on Scotland, and he maintained, through life, a constant correspondence, not only with his domestic tutor of Glasgow, but with Professor Young, Professor Millar, and Mr. Mackenzie, the Addison of the North! Of Rose's juvenile studies it may be sufficient to say, that he obtained every prize, except one, for which he contended as a student of the university. After passing three winters at Glasgow, he attended the courts of law in Edinburgh.

His acquaintance with the literature of Scotland rendered him ambitious of a personal introduction to the celebrated Adam Smith, which he easily obtained. Smith was so highly pleased with the lively English student, young as he was, that as long as he resided in Edinburgh, he was constantly invited to the literary circle of that eminent philosopher.

I have thought it proper to notice Rose's early acquaintance with literary men, because his chief title to be commemorated in this work arises from his intimacy with Cowper, and the circumstan-

ces already mentioned, may serve to shew how well prepared the young scholar was on his return from Edinburgh to England, to prove a visiter peculiarly agreeable and animating to the sequestered poet of Weston. As the origin and progress of their friendship is perfectly displayed in the letters of Cowper, I proceed to an account of the principle occurrences in the life, alas! the brief life, of my younger friend. He had the misfortune to lose his excellent father, while he was pursuing his studies in the North; but a loss so unseasonable did not induce him to shrink from the first irksome labours of an arduous profession. Having entered his name at Lincoln's Inn, November 6, 1786, Rose devoted himself to the law, a line of life for which he seemed equally prepared by nature and education.

With a mind acute and powerful, with a fund of classical learning, and of general knowledge, with an early command of language, and with manners peculiarly conciliating, he had every thing to hope. Though his spirit was naturally ardent, he submitted to the most tiresome process of early discipline in his profession, placing himself under a special pleader in 1787, and attending him three years—being called to the bar in 1796, he attached himself to

to the home circuit, and to the sessions of Sussex. His first opportunity of displaying professional ability occurred in Chichester, where, having a clergyman for his client, he conciliated the esteem of his audience by expatiating with propriety, eloquence, and success, on the character of divine.

The young advocate was still more admired for the display of a talent peculiarly striking in a barrister of no experience! I mean the rare talent of examining a witness with a becoming mixture of acuteness and humanity. In questioning a good, but misguided woman, he showed not only a decent, but a most delicate indulgence to her sex and situation, yet ingeniously and tenderly drew from her all the information that was sufficient to establish the innocence of his client. The commencement of a professional career is a most interesting scene to a young barrister, and to his anxious friends. Rose had the gratification of hearing, that many of his acquaintance, who attended him with affectionate solicitude on this occasion, conceived, from the first display of his talents, a most sanguine hope and persuasion, that he was destined to rise by sure, though slow degrees, to the highest honors of his profession. But Heaven had otherwise decreed!

Though, like most men of middling stature, he possessed a considerable portion of bodily strength and agility, his constitution was naturally delicate. At a very early age he had been afflicted with periodical head-achs of extreme severity, and soon after he began to exercise his profession, his friends were apprehensive, that his progress in it might be cruelly impeded by the appearance of hereditary gout. On a circumstance so alarming, it was suggested to him, that perhaps his best mode of guarding against the evils that might arise from an enemy so insidious, and so formidable, would be to make an early retreat from a very laborious profession, and take refuge in the honourable tranquillity of the church. An idea, which engaged his serious deliberation, because a nobleman of singular beneficence, who knew his merits, and his critical situation, most liberally offered to him the refuge in question by a conditional promise of ecclesiastical preferment. The grateful spirit of Rose was deeply affected by an unexpected offer of patronage, and as his exemplary father had early impressed on his mind the belief of Christianity, he was far from feeling any motives of conscience, that could make him unwilling to become a minister of the reli-

gion which he revered. But he had ever entertained a high sense of personal honor, and he supposed, that a man once embarked in an arduous professon, could hardly quit it for a less active line of life without exposing himself to some degree of discredit. He felt indeed, that his situation was critical, and that it was incumbent on him to pay all manly attention both to health and to fortune. He had married, in his twenty-fourth year, a daughter of Dr. Farr, physician to the Royal Hospital, near Plymouth, a lady, who with a moderate portion, brought him the more valuable dower of an elevated understanding. He had, at this time, a little group of boys, who (to speak of them in the expressive language of Sterne) "looked up to him for light." Their affectionate father resolved to afford them all the light he could, by a steady exertion of his own talents and virtues in the line of life he had chosen. He was perfectly aware, that he must be subject to transient fits of oppressive indisposition, but he hoped they would be mitigated by a resolute temperance, and regularity of life. Though conscious of the difficulties and hazards he had to encounter, under an evident disadvantage, he was also conscious that he was far from being deficient in that native and well-cultivated

energy of mind, which frequently conquers the most formidable impediments. Such were the motives, which after mature deliberation induced him to persevere in his profession. The patience of a young lawyer is sure to be tried by the slow acquisition of business. Perhaps there is no profession, whose followers more completely experience the truth of the maxim, that "hope delayed maketh the heart sick:" Or who find more frequent occasion to repeat the expressive exclamation of Beattie,

> Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
> The steep, where Fame's proud temple shines afar?

Judgment and resolution are both requisite to employ advantageously the vacant time, that a young barrister must have to fill up in his years of patient probation. Rose made a good choice of literary employment for this purpose, by devoting his leisure to the republication of useful law books. In 1792 he produced an improved edition of Lord Chief Baron Comyn's Reports, and in 1800 he published in a 4th edition, The Digest of the Laws of England, by the same eminent lawyer, corrected and continued;

inscribing each to the Chancellor of the day, the first to Lord Thurlow, the second to Lord Loughborough.

By these creditable productions, and by the usual progress of a mind peculiarly industrious and social, Rose seemed at length to have surmounted every difficulty, and to be advancing in such practice as opened a very chearful and brilliant prospect before him: such was the pleasing persuasion of his many friends, when their hopes were converted into alarm and affliction.

Attending the Sussex sessions in January 1804, where he appeared again as the eloquent and successful advocate of innocence, he caught a cold so severe, that it produced a rheumatic fever in the head. His disorder assumed new shapes, and gradually occasioned a great variety of sufferings. I saw him in the summer on his way to the sessions at Horsham, and being shocked by his emaciated appearance, earnestly entreated him to suspend his hazardous intention; but impaired as he was in bodily strength, his mind retained all its energy without a particle of apprehension. He had established it as a law never to shrink from any professional duty, and he fell an early victim to that magnanimous resolution.

A letter, that I received from a friend in July, assured me that Rose had passed through the duties of his profession at Horsham with great firmness of mind, though his frame and countenance discovered the most alarming appearances of a rapid and incurable decay.

In the course of the autumn, he tried the air of the Kentish coast; but returned to London in a state so far from recovery, that his physicians considered his disorder as a confirmed hectic. It is the nature of this subtle disease to elude the observation of its victim in a very marvellous manner, and Rose is a remarkable example of this consolatory truth. He had no perception of his own danger till the beginning of December; but in passing through variations of suffering, extended through eleven months, he continued to exercise his faculties in the dispatch of business before him, and to form very chearful plans of future occupation.

On the third of December, feeling a great encrease of debility, he drew from his physician and father-in-law, Dr. Farr, a perfect avowal of his imminent danger. He heard it with surprize, but without any emotions of terror or dismay.

The first idea that he exprest, was concern for

the shock, which his affectionate wife must sustain in being apprized that his death was so near.

On being informed by her father, that she had been gradually prepared for the worst, the dying man forgetful of himself, expressed a most tender and generous sense of the great fortitude and kindness, with which that admirable woman had surpressed and disguised her own feelings, for such a length of time, to support the spirits of a declining invalide in a very beneficial illusion.

He declared, that he had never obtained till that moment perfect knowledge of his fatal disease. He was instantly aware, that he must now, in all probability, have very few days to live, and with serene magnanimity he began to employ them in the most earnest yet tranquil attention to all the duties of a departing Christian.

To dwell on the death-bed of a young and highly promising friend must be a task of considerable anguish to a feeling heart; but from the pain inevitably attending it I will not shrink on this occasion, because I deem it incumbent on me to describe, in the most trying of human scenes, the conduct and temper of the man, whose loss is deeply felt by all, who perfectly knew him, and whose close of life,

in being simply and justly delineated, can hardly fail to prove, in some degree, a lesson of public utility.

In sketches of biography the latter hours of the person commemorated are observed to excite a peculiarity of interest, which Addison has well explained by saying—"The dying man is one, whom, sooner or later, we shall certainly resemble."

The death of Addison himself, so distinguished by Christian serenity, and so feelingly recorded by Dr. Young, affords not a scene of more instruction than the departure of Rose, of whom, though his life had the grace of the most becoming benevolence, it may be truly said, in the words of Shakespear,

> Nothing in his life
> Became him, like the leaving it: he died
> As one, that had been studied in his death.

After cherishing, for a long time, very sanguine expectations of recovery, he found it requisite, on a sudden, to relinquish all the many endearing ties, that attached him to the earth—to settle every wordly concern, and devote himself to God. This arduous task he immediately accomplished with an

astonishing promptitude, acuteness, and vigour of mind, though suffering bodily infirmities of a very oppressive nature, particularly in the breast, now the principal seat of his malady! He employed many hours every day in examining and adjusting his papers. He thought it right to express his confidence in the understanding, and the heart of Mrs. Rose, by not appointing any other guardian to his four sons.

This interesting sufferer had yet several most trying days and nights to pass on his bed of death, to which he was confined in one posture for three weeks, with a body harrassed at times by varieties of pain, and gradually wasting; but with a mind, that seemed to derive new serenity, and new powers, from his near approach to a better world. A great part of the first night, after being thoroughly apprized of his situation, he devoted to fervent prayer. His former transient hopes of returning health were then converted into the stedfast hope of eternal happiness. In the subsequent days he conversed occasionally with those he loved on various subjects, both serious and chearful, displaying upon all an astonishing strength and vivacity of mind. All his intellectual powers seemed to be collected

and exerted for the noble purpose of bearing, with the most tranquil fortitude and resignation, his own complicated sufferings; and of alleviating the internal anguish of all around him.

He spoke of his increasing hope and confidence in the mercy of God, and the mediation of his Redeemer. He said his belief in the truths of Christianity had never been shaken; but that finding himself unable to give satisfactory reasons for that belief, he had, in a season of leisure, soon after the beginning of his illness, deliberately examined the great question, and from the course of reading which he then pursued, he became unshakeable in his faith.

The authors who confirmed him in it were Lardner and Paley. He recommended them, and Paley most particularly, to all who doubted. He expressed a tender and generous satisfaction, that his friends had been long prepared for his death, and that he was not sooner aware of it, repeating his gratitude to those, who had been most instrumental in preventing his earlier discovery of his insidious disorder.——"God," (he said,) "has been merciful to "me in closing my eyes, almost miraculously, till I "could bear their being opened.——Had my death

" been precipitated, after I knew my danger, I should " scarcely have dared to trust my own feelings: the " necessity for instant preparation might have made " me dread the delusive tendency of sudden confi- " dence, but I have lived long enough since to re- " view my grounds for confidence, and I have un- " speakable comfort in assuring those I love, that I " am daily more reconciled to leaving the world " now, rather than at a later period."

Many parts of his behaviour excited the most tender admiration; but none more, than his quick and minute recollection upon all interesting points, under circumstances the most awful, and to him the most unexpected. Nothing was forgotten, which could tend to improve the forlorn condition, or to soothe the various sufferings of those, who, in losing him, were soon to be deprived of their most valuable blessing.

He sent for his eldest son, a youth of twelve years, with whom he conversed in language so tender, and so impressive, that it will probably have a very beneficial influence on his maturer life.

In a few days after this affecting interview, Rose who had himself felt an affection truly filial for his incomparable friend Cowper, expressed a strong

desire to embrace once more his second child, the godson, and the namesake of the beloved poet. Their meeting was tender, and even joyous, for the affectionate gaiety of Rose's heart adhered to him under all his sufferings, and in the intervals between his severer fits of bodily anguish, the native pleasantry of his spirit continued to animate his conversation. How much the feelings of the parent were agitated by the presence of a child so singularly endeared to him, we may conceive from his not obtaining any portion of sleep through the night, that followed their meeting.

But all the earthly pains and pleasures of this interesting invalide were now hastily advancing to their close.

On the fourth day after his reception of the little Cowper; Rose, observing that his pulse had sunk considerably, said to Dr. Frazer, who attended him:——"You think, Sir, it will soon be over?"——"Yes! (replied his liberal, friendly, and sympathetic physician) you have not now long to suffer."—"I thank you, Sir, I am sincerely glad to hear it."—"I do believe you to be sincere in saying "so; I am sure I do not alarm, but relieve you; "God bless you, my dear Sir. Be assured we shall

meet again."——"I feel confident, we shall meet again," the dying sufferer replied with grateful energy; and tenderly added—"Farewell, my dear Sir, in this world!"

This passed in the evening of the twentieth. The affectionate father spoke chearfully, once again, to his children, and desired to see a little sweetmeat distributed to them as an expression of kindness from him, before they retired for the night.

After ten o'clock his sufferings became more oppressive from encreasing expectoration. He then recommended his parting soul to God, and before twelve he expired without a struggle.

Thus perished in his thirty-eighth year, the man, whom Cowper had early encouraged to advance in every laudable pursuit, with a most lively hope, that his natural and acquired abilities would lead him to great professional eminence:—a hope invariably cherished by many of his friends, till they beheld it sink in the calamitous failure and extinction of health, and life.

Cowper's cordial esteem and tender solicitude for the prosperity of his young friend, have been extensively displayed in the letters addressed to him and may be manifested still farther by the follow

billet, with which the poet introduced him soon after their first acquaintance, to one of his most tried and most faithful friends.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 2, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I told you lately, that I had an ambition to introduce to your acquaintance my valuable friend, Mr. Rose. He is now before you. You will find him a person of genteel manners and agreeable conversation. As to his other virtues and good qualities, which are many, and such as are not often found in men of his years, I consign them over to your own discernment, perfectly sure, that none of them will escape you. I give you joy of each other, and remain, my dear old friend, most truly yours,

W. C.

The gratitude and veneration of Rose towards the poet of Weston were like the feelings of an excellent son to a most affectionate and illustrious father. Whenever the talents and reputation of Cowper were mentioned in his presence, his eyes used to sparkle with a fond enthusiastic delight.

An ardent love of literature had ever been a

acteristic of Rose, and he gave a signal proof of n the closing scene of his life. He had been requested to revise the collected works, and life of Goldsmith, published in 1801. In the course of his three weeks confinement to the bed of death, he corrected some inaccuracies in that interesting publication, and sent his corrections with the expressive farewell of a dying man to the publishers.

Had his days been as healthy and extensive as friendship wished them to be, his active spirit would probably have produced in his professional vacations various works of elegant literature. One of his literary projects was to revise and improve the translation of Sallust published by his father. I have his interleaved copy of this book, with a brief commencement of what he intended. He said a little before his death, "that he meant to prefix to it a memoir of Dr. Rose. This, (he added) will now be "done by a friend, who in speaking of my father, "may give perhaps some account of his son."

The continuance of human faculties is too precarious, especially in the evening of life, to authorize any great promises, but with the favor of Heaven, I may yet hope to render more justice, in a season of more leisure, to the social, and to the studi-

ous character of Rose, in works expressly devote[d] that purpose.——Here I will only add to this fai[th]ful narrative of his exemplary death the verses com[-]posed under the influence of recent affliction, as part of an inscription for a tablet, by which a few asso[-]ciated admirers of their lost friend are preparing to testify their sincere regard for his memory.

Esteem'd, admir'd, and lost, in manhood's prime!
But who may question God's appointed time?
Rash grief! profane not Rose's hallow'd tomb,
Though Heaven its gifts, of earthly hope, resume!
Learning, and wit, and eloquence, and truth,
The patient thought of age, the zeal of youth,
To man these bright endowments seem'd to claim
A long and rich career of legal fame;
But angels often from their sire impart
His early summons to the pure in heart.
Friendship must weep, tho' faith, with blameless pride,
Tells, how the Christian triumph'd as he died:
Earth's dearest blessings round his heart entwin'd,
To God, who gave them all, he all resign'd.

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